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RESTATEMENT AND REUNION

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TORONTO

RESTATEMENT AND REUNION

A Study in First Principles

BY

BURNETT HILLMAN STREETER

FELLOW, DEAN AND LECTURER IN THEOLOGY AND CLASSICS OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD; THEOLOGICAL LECTURER OF HERTFORD COLLEGE
FORMERLY FELLOW OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE
EDITOR OF "FOUNDATIONS"

SECOND IMPRESSION

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1914

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First Edition, May, 1914.
Reprinted with additional matter, June, 1914.

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NOTE TO THE SECOND IMPRESSION

It has been suggested to me that Essay IV should properly include some discussion of the question whether an Anglican ought under any circumstances to receive the Communion in a Non-Episcopalian Church. This omission I have now endeavoured to repair. *Cf.* pp. 194–207.

B. H. S.

INTRODUCTION

THE object of this book is not controversial but constructive. Controversy of any kind is rarely in the interest of true religion; controversy on party lines is never so. If the Church of England is to cope with the practical and intellectual problems of to-day, means must be found somehow of bringing together all that is best in the spiritual traditions of the High Church and the Evangelical Schools respectively, and combining them with the intellectual fearlessness of the old Broad Church party. The contribution which any one individual can make to such a result is necessarily small, but the recognition of this fact does not absolve any individual from attempting to do what he can. With this intention, and with a full consciousness of their deficiencies, I

venture to publish these Studies in First Principles. Two of them, I should add, are based on sermons, delivered to the University of Oxford in my turn as Select Preacher, expanded and modified so as to form, with the others, a continuous and connected series.

Except for a passing allusion to a book by my witty friend and critic, Mr. Knox, I have made no attempt to reply to any of the strictures which have been passed upon my Essay in "Foundations," and I have not attempted to defend any of the views there expressed. I may, however, remark that some critics have done less than justice to my standpoint through having, apparently, overlooked the paragraph in my Essay implying that I heartily associate myself with the general position, taken up elsewhere in the volume, in regard to the Divinity of Christ. Again, the amount of space I was able to allot to the discussion of the Resurrection was all too little; with the result that some, who have only vouchsafed to that little a hurried reading, have attributed to me views which I do not hold. But though I disclaim responsibility for some of the opinions which have been ascribed to me by others, I see no reason

to retract any of those which I have myself expressed, nor even, as at present advised, to modify them in any important particular. But, as the publicity which they have received is sufficient to ensure their receiving the serious consideration of the Church at large, no good purpose would be served by their reiteration.

On the principle that a cobbler, however incompetent, should, at any rate, stick to his last, it may possibly occur to some one to say, that I should have been wiser to have confined the title and scope of this volume to the subject of Theological Restatement, and to have left the question of Reunion to others. I may therefore explain that during the last twelve months a visit to India and Ceylon has given me the opportunity of some first-hand study of the practical aspects of that problem, as it presents itself in the Mission field. I have also come to realise more distinctly than before that the problem of Theological Restatement is more intimately connected with that of Reunion than is commonly supposed. For both problems depend for their solution on a clearer and more comprehensive elucidation of Truth ; and, in religion,

isolation inevitably leads to a distorted or one-sided apprehension of Truth. They resemble one another, I would add, in one more respect. They cannot be solved all at once. For though opinions differ as to the value of practical experiments, like those suggested at Kikuyu, or theological experiments, like those put forward in "Foundations," there can be little doubt that it is only by making such experiments, with all the element of risk which this entails, that the right solutions will be found.

Three-fourths of the volume were already in page proof before the publication of the Bishop of Oxford's pronouncement on *The Basis of Anglican Fellowship*, so that it was composed without reference to the position there laid down. I am happy, however, to reflect that it is essentially a response to the appeal, which the Bishop there makes to members of the Church of England, to think out first principles.

I am not without hope that the principles I have worked out, and the practical suggestions I have ventured to make, in the concluding paper, on the vexed question of Intercommunion, may ultimately commend

themselves to his judgment as a possible solution of present difficulties. I cannot pretend to hope that he will receive with equal favour the reflections which I have offered on the subject of Theological Restatement. I was, however, glad to notice a sentence in his Open Letter which implies that nothing advanced in the book "Foundations" goes outside what he regards as the extreme limits of toleration; and I believe that there is nothing in this present volume which he will consider as doing so.

I feel, however, bound to register a protest against the Bishop's implication that difficulties as to the Virgin Birth, the Physical Resurrection and the "nature" miracles are only felt acutely by those who base their criticism "on a mistaken view of natural law, and on something much less than a Christian belief in God." And I demur to the statement that "it is those who reject these miracles, and not those who affirm them, who do violence to the evidence." Thirty years ago this may have been the case; but the *à priori* philosophical objections to miracles, though still not inconsiderable, carry far less weight now than they did then. It is pre-

cisely the nature of the evidence that gives men pause to-day.

For purely literary and critical questions are not the only ones to be considered. There is a growing realisation by historians and psychologists of the large subjective element which enters into every record of historical fact, especially where the witness has not been carefully educated in the difficult art of close observation and correct description. In particular, Christian Scholars are becoming more keenly alive to the significance of the fact that in all nations, at certain stages of culture, stories of miracles are found rapidly to gather round striking personages, especially religious leaders. It is indeed less the weakness of the evidence for the Biblical miracles, than the strength of the evidence for others, that constitutes one of the main difficulties at the present time.

Stories of "nature" miracles, and even of supernatural births, are found outside the Bible, attested by evidence, which in the case of non-miraculous occurrences would be regarded as at least respectable. The reason why Christians, while rejecting these outright, are yet disposed to consider seriously the

evidence for the Gospel miracles, is that the Gospel miracles are felt to be in some sense congruous with the character of God, with the Christian scheme of redemption and revelation in general, and with the moral and spiritual uniqueness of the person of Christ. These, I would observe, are as essentially considerations of an *à priori* character as are the ordinary *à priori* objections to miracles; and both have an equal claim to be treated seriously. Both alike must be subjected to the test of keen philosophical analysis; and they must both be considered in relation to the *à posteriori* evidence for miracles in general, whether Biblical or extra-Biblical, as well as that for particular Gospel miracles.

The conclusions of such an investigation, both on its philosophical and on its evidential side, must necessarily be determined by considerations of the most intricate and delicate kind. So complex a problem does not admit of an easy and clear cut solution—or, indeed, I would urge, of any solution so absolutely certain and impregnable as to be capable of being made an *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae* in the present age.

The point on which the Bishop lays most

stress is the obligation of Clerical Veracity; and, if I may be permitted to say so, I think he has done the Church a service in calling attention to a moral issue of no small importance. The place occupied by the Creeds in the Liturgy of the Church of England makes their constant recitation obligatory on every clergyman. The Bishop urges that for a clergyman to perform this duty, if he disbelieves, or even doubts, the literal truth of the miraculous incidents alluded to in the Creeds, is inconsistent with "the veracity required in all public professions."

The remarks which I make in the second paper in this volume (which were already in print before I had seen the Bishop's Open Letter) will, I hope, acquit me of the charge of being personally indifferent to the paramount claims of truth, when I say that I am compelled entirely to dissent from the general conclusion he arrives at. The more salient considerations, which appear to me to bear on the subject, are, briefly, as follows:—

(1) The unique authority, which the Bishop is inclined to attribute to the Creeds, goes

beyond that which is assigned to them either in the popular mind or in the official formularies of the Church. For the Church of England their binding authority is conditioned by a principle, on which the Bishop himself, in reference to another matter, lays great stress, viz., "the acceptance of Scripture as limiting dogmatic requirement," *i.e.*, they are binding because, to quote the Article, "they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." In an age when the interpretation of Scripture has been revolutionised, the interpretation of the Creeds cannot be supposed to be unaffected.

(2) When a clergyman recites, as part of a traditional liturgical service, a form of words upwards of fifteen centuries old, he undoubtedly commits himself to a hearty assent to its general intention. He is not supposed to be committing himself to that literal affirmation of every individual statement which would be expected of him in the case of an affidavit submitted to him for his personal acceptance.

(3) Several of the clauses of the Apostles' Creed, those, for instance, which speak of Creation, of Heaven and Hell in connection

with our Lord's Ascent and Descent thereto, and of the Day of Judgment, are, by common consent, admitted to be symbolical (*cf.* below, pp. 75–76). Indeed, as the Bishop himself points out, "with regard to what lies outside present human experience, we can only be taught, or formulate our beliefs, in *symbolical* language—language which is in a measure diverted from its original purpose." But these clauses of the Creed were drawn up in direct reference to certain passages of Scripture, which, so far as their matter-of-fact and realistic manner of description is concerned, cannot be distinguished from the passages which relate to the Birth and Resurrection of our Lord. The clear cut distinction, drawn by the Bishop, between those historical statements which may, or rather *must*, be taken symbolically, and those which are to be taken literally, might possibly have been understood by the learned Fathers of Alexandria and some others. It is highly improbable that it was made in the early Roman Church, in which the Apostles' Creed originated, and it has never been recognised by the vast mass of Christians.

(4) The exact manner of the union of Divine and Human in the person of Christ, and the exact nature of the Life beyond the grave, are both, to use the Bishop's own language, conceptions which carry one "outside the world of present possible experience, and symbolical language is the only language" that can be used to express them. Thus the hard and fast distinction which he makes between the clauses which affirm the Incarnation and Resurrection on the one hand, and those which relate to Creation, Heaven, Hell and Judgment on the other, breaks down in another important particular.

In view of these considerations, I would urge that, provided always a clergyman is a sincere believer in the Divinity of our Lord and in the reality of His personal conquest over Death, there is nothing anomalous or incongruous in his claim to treat certain clauses in the Creed as symbolical rather than as strictly literal expressions of these beliefs. But his claim to do so is consistent with absolute sincerity on one condition, and on one condition only, viz., that, with all due regard to appropriateness of occasion, and with all due respect to the susceptibilities of those

who think otherwise than himself, he makes it perfectly clear to those to whom he ministers that he does claim this particular right.

As an objection to the position I am maintaining, it may be urged that the phrase "born of the Virgin Mary," if treated as symbol or parable, is, from the point of view of the modern mind, not a very illuminative symbol; and that therefore to treat it as such involves a certain amount of "mental reservation." The objection—which applies, by the way, with almost equal force to any possible interpretation of the clause "He descended into Hell"—is one which it is easy to make too much of, but that there is nothing in it I certainly will not maintain. But in this matter none of the Bishops and few of the Clergy and Laity are in a position to throw stones. All of them, at any rate I hope so, would admit with the Bishop of Oxford that there is at least one clause in the Athanasian Creed which they cannot recite "without a mental reservation."

The Bishop speaks of the Athanasian Creed as a "canticle," and draws certain distinctions between it and the other Creeds. In its history and origin it was no doubt somewhat

different. But if we were to go into questions of origin, something might be made of the fact that in the actual Creed which was sanctioned by the Council of Nicaea, which is popularly regarded as having a certain primacy among the Councils, there was no mention of the Virgin Birth ; or of the fact that the only form of Creed, which has Œcumenical sanction, begins with the words, "We believe," which, as the Bishop concedes, implies a less strictly personal form of assent than the Western formula "I believe." But questions of historical origin, or degree of Œcumenical sanction, are entirely irrelevant to the question of the legitimacy, or otherwise, of allowing the use of "mental reservation" in the public recitation of the Creeds. And so far as the *Quicunque Vult* is concerned, there is no denying that the Articles, the Prayer-Book and the plain man agree in calling it a "Creed." It is ordered to be used as a *substitute* for the usual Creed ; and that, be it observed, not on unimportant occasions, but on the most solemn festivals of the Church. Moreover, those who most desire to effect a change, and those who most vehemently resist it, are agreed in doing so, because they regard

the document as having credal force. The Bishop holds out hopes that the obligation to recite it may be removed at an early date. I confess I am less optimistic. But if the change were made to-morrow, those who claimed to treat as "canticles" some other documents, which the Church styles "Creeds," could at least plead that they were only doing what the Bishop of Oxford and all his brethren have been doing throughout long and beneficent ministerial careers.

But the question is not merely whether a man is *justified* in retaining or seeking Holy Orders, if he is either doubtful whether the Virgin Birth is historical, or even if he is persuaded that it is not. There are many believers in the Divinity of our Lord, who are convinced that the future of Christianity depends on its being proved to be possible to dissociate that belief from any necessary dependence on the evidence for the miracle in question. Among them are men who are passionately convinced that the Church of England holds a unique position in the Church of Christ, and has a unique mission to perform in the world, and that, in so far as that is the case, the future of Christianity depends on the

attitude which the Church of England takes up on this particular question. Such men do not put the question to themselves in the form "Am I justified in remaining in, or in entering into, the ministry?" They ask, rather, whether they are justified in declining to take that course. When men like the Bishop of Oxford and many others, whose character and ability they revere, tell them their place is outside, they may hesitate for a moment; but they take courage from the reflection that precisely the same thing has been said by wise and good men to everyone of the Prophets that have arisen in the Church of England, from the author of "Tract XC" to the Editor of "Lux Mundi."

Consideration for the views and feelings of the older generation, anxiety to avoid at all costs anything which might cause to offend any of the little ones whose souls are committed to their charge, have been, and have properly been, motives which in the past have caused many of the clergy to exercise a certain amount of reserve in the public discussion of these questions. But the times have changed rapidly of late. Problems, once only recognised in the Professor's study,

are now canvassed in the drawing-room, and in the working man's club. It is no longer possible to conceal from the weakest of the weaker brethren the fact that things once held to be beyond question are now not only questioned, but questionable. The danger to-day is not that the clergyman, in trying to solve difficulties, shall only suggest them, but that, by studiously avoiding them, he shall suggest that no solution exists. The ordinary Church-goer, male *and* female, is finding it harder than ever to believe that the clergy can be ignorant of difficulties, which the *Clarion* and the Rationalist Press in one sphere, the playwright and the novelist in another, are constantly dinning into the ears of men—and of women. If a suspicion once becomes current that the clergy do not discuss these questions because they have not the courage to face them, the Bishop's foreboding will, indeed, be realised, and "the Church of England will be publicly convicted of insincerity, and will lose all moral weight with the mass of Englishmen."

B. H. S.

May, 1914.

RESTATEMENT AND REUNION

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I

THE SIMPLICITY OF CHRISTIANITY

Everyone, I should imagine, who is engaged in the study or the teaching of Theology, must from time to time be oppressed by the feeling that the concentration on critical, historical or philosophical problems necessitated by his work, may possibly lead him into what may be, after all, but an elaborate missing of the essential point of Christianity. It was not with regret, but with exultation, that the words were spoken, "I thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and hast revealed them unto babes."

I do not, of course, mean that such studies

are unimportant. If the Church is the body of Christ, that is, the expression of His personality here on earth, it is of the first importance that that body should be one, in which the intellectual, as well as the practical and devotional, functions of personality have room for expression; and, if there *is* to be a theology at all, it is of the first importance that it should be one, which is not out of touch with the science and the philosophy, the criticism and the scholarship of the age.

But theology must always be for the few, and even for those few it can only represent one aspect of the soul's life. This has always been recognised by Christians; but in the present age it is especially necessary to emphasise more strongly than ever that the centre of gravity of Christianity does not lie in theology. For, whether we may regret it or not, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the traditional Christian theology has lost the prestige, which it enjoyed in earlier ages through its acceptance, practically without question, by the leaders of human thought. This no longer holds good; and although

individual thinkers may for their own part give their adherence either to the traditional theology or to some particular restatement, adaptation or modification of it, it is impossible for them to close their eyes to the fact that others, equally qualified to hold and express an opinion, think very differently. It may well be that the present situation is transitional, and that in the course of time, perhaps in a generation or two, perhaps after many generations, a theology commanding general acceptance will be again evolved. But so long as there is no greater agreement than at present obtains among historical critics or philosophical theologians, it would seem that anyone, who builds his faith primarily on their conclusions, cannot be without apprehensions that he is building his house upon the sand.

The necessities of the time, then, seem to be forcing us back, as again and again has happened at every important crisis in the course of Christian history, to the words of our Lord Himself: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." With this feeling upon me, I have been pondering

how I could present to my own mind the essential elements of the Christian message in such a way as to render it independent of all those subtleties of historical criticism or metaphysics, the hazardous and conjectural nature of which, are best known to those who have most closely studied them.

Asking myself, then, how I could interpret to myself in the simplest form, and, of course, only in the barest outline, the essence of the Christian message, it seemed to me to be included in six main ideas—each in itself ineffably simple, yet each infinitely expansive in its practical application. First, Christianity is a disposition of the soul: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Secondly, a resultant course of action: "If any man would be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me." Thirdly, a consequent achievement: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Fourthly, if it be asked, "And who is sufficient for these things?" there is the promise of a response on the part

of the Divine to such feeble efforts as we may make: "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you," "My grace is sufficient for thee." Fifthly, there is the assurance that failure can be retrieved: "For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Lastly, there is the sure and certain hope, "This is the promise which He promised us, even life eternal." On the first two and the last two points I propose to dwell very briefly, thus leaving room to offer a few reflections at somewhat greater length on the third and fourth.

(I)

"Love God; love thy neighbour": "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." We find here no refinements of casuistry, no intricacies of dogmatic definition, no elaboration of ceremonial ordinance; nothing which is easier to the expert than to the man in the street; nothing in which the wise and understanding have any advantage over babes. Yet there is here nothing childish, nothing immature, nothing that human thought and human progress have

transcended, or are ever likely to transcend. Progress and development there have been since these words were spoken ; but they have consisted only in men's seeing more clearly where to look for the manifestations of God, the Divine, the Ideal, and in their becoming more and more sensitive to new directions and particular instances, in which the principle "Love your neighbour" should be applied. And such an advance depends less on the trained intellect of scientist, scholar or philosopher, than on the trained instinct of the heart of those who have striven to follow Christ, and on the quickened conscience of a society, which the leaven of Christ's teaching has begun to permeate.

(II)

"Let him take up his cross and follow me." *In vacuo*, as it were, and without some concrete definition, it might be asked how far the love of God and the love of man, which is the Christian attitude of the soul, is to go, when it passes from feeling into action, and from motive into practice. The answer is,

"There is no 'how far?' Follow me"; that is, follow in the footsteps of One who—convinced that He was the Messiah of God, the destined Ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth—chose not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life for the forwarding of the Kingdom of God.

Some of the saints of old, it would seem, achieved a state of mind in which they positively welcomed the finding and the carrying of the cross: going out of their way to seek suffering for its own sake by multifarious asceticism and self-torture, and actually rejoicing in it. And from time to time one comes across people to-day of whom this seems almost, if not quite, to be true. To the ordinary Englishman such asceticism seems morbid and unhealthy, and I am inclined to think he is right. Did not our Lord Himself in Gethsemane pray, "If it be possible let this cup pass"? At any rate of very few, even of those who have longest striven to follow Him, can it be said that in their heart of hearts they *wish* to bear the cross. But that is not required; the follower of Christ has no need to seek out crosses to take up:

> "The trivial round, the common task,
> Will furnish all we need to ask,
> Room to deny ourselves, a road
> To bring us daily nearer God."

In a world full of sorrow and degradation, whether we will or no, crosses are thrust upon us; but the choice *is* ours, whether to bear them cheerfully, and in the spirit of Christ: or to bear them sullenly, in resentment and bitterness of heart.

(III)

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." We now come very near the heart of the Christian message. It is affirmed that the life which Christ led, the life which we are invited to lead, is the highest life of all—so much so that it is in fact the life of God, so that He, who perfectly lived that life on earth, is called the "image of the invisible God." Moreover, it is asserted that, in so far as our own lives approximate to that life, we too may "become the sons of God." "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." The point is of such central importance that it

must be dwelt upon at rather greater length. I believe that it contains the essence of Christianity.

Pleasure is pleasant and pain hurts; it is a natural human instinct to deduce that pleasure is good, pain evil. It is the affirmation of Christianity that, so far as moral values are concerned, this is a mistake, and that pleasure and pain, prosperity and adversity, are in themselves neither good nor bad; they are only the raw material out of which goodness or badness may be manufactured according to the manner in which we use them. Admit for the moment that this judgment is the right one, and it follows that that other natural human instinct is also mistaken, which regards suffering of any kind, unless obviously merited by an equivalent moral offence, as an outrage and injustice on the part of the Power, whatever it be, that controls the Universe. The notion that suffering *always* leads to moral growth is not borne out by experience, but that it *frequently* does so is indubitable. But equally indubitable is it that where suffering *does* elevate, it is quite as often the suffering, which seems to us to be undeserved, as that which is

plainly the result of open-eyed misdemeanour. It is, moreover, a fact of experience that, while *merited* suffering, borne in the right spirit, elevates and purifies the sufferer, *unmerited* suffering, similarly borne, has a virtue peculiar to itself. It elevates and inspires not only the sufferer himself, but many of those who come in contact with him.

This last point would be more readily recognised were it not for the difficulty—a difficulty not peculiar to this case, but common to every search for explanations, whether in science or elsewhere—the difficulty of isolating the phenomenon under investigation. For when we reflect on the problem of unmerited suffering, as seen in ordinary experience, we are liable to be confused by the fact that we never get a clear case. We can often see a life, in which it seems that suffering outmatches desert, we can never see one, of which it can be said that *nothing* that was suffered was deserved. But in the life and passion of our Lord we do get such a case. The ideally good man is brought to the ideally bad end—not from any morbid ascetic passion for suffering—"Father, if it be pos-

sible let this cup pass"—yet voluntarily and with His full consent, in order thereby to forward the coming of the Kingdom of God. Hence in His case, the possibilities of unmerited suffering rightly borne are clearly manifested; and it is affirmed that by His suffering He was Himself made perfect (Heb. ii. 10) and that by His suffering He, potentially at least, redeemed the world. But a way of life that at one and the same time results in the perfecting of character to him who leads it, and in the maximum benefit to his fellow men, is plainly the highest conceivable form of life.

A line of thought like this brings us to view, not only the problem of suffering and sin, but the whole meaning and purpose of life, the whole scale of moral values, the meaning of words like "great," or "good," from a different angle of vision. It is as though one brought up in the old commonsense view that the sun goes round the earth were to be suddenly confronted with proofs of the discovery of Copernicus that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, it is the earth that goes round the sun. Common-

sense judgment, the "natural" man's fundamental estimates of value, are simply reversed; or, to use the familiar metaphor of the New Testament, it is as if a man were born afresh into a new and different world.

A further point, however, and one often overlooked, is this. Along with such a reversal of our primitive, natural and common-sense valuation of things on earth, there must necessarily go a reversal of our ordinary *primâ facie* valuation of things in heaven. If the life that Christ led is the highest life of all, it must somehow or other be the life which God leads; and if we want to picture to ourselves the life of God, we shall picture it to ourselves, *not* as resembling the manner of life of the Kings of the Gentiles, lording it in pomp and luxury, but rather as like the life of "the Son of Man, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

No doubt the infinite cannot be comprehended by the finite; God is necessarily a Being higher and greater than we can understand. But if we think of Him in terms of the highest we know, we think of

Him in the terms, which are the least inadequate. No concept or category is known to us, which is higher and more comprehensive than that of personal life directed towards the highest end ; and therefore in the ideal human life we see the completest possible revelation of the nature of God Himself.

The life of Christ, then, with its sorrows and its joys, with its failures and its triumph, with its Death and its Resurrection, is *sub specie temporis*, so far, that is, as man can apprehend it, the life of God. God is Life and God is Love, always, through all eternity, sharing the suffering, battling with the evil ; yet all along, above and through and beyond the suffering and the struggle, possessing that peace which passeth all understanding, in that heaven in which the risen Christ and His risen followers continually dwell, where death is swallowed up in victory.

Think of God as some glorified, supernatural Potentate, immune from suffering and merely vengeful towards guilt—and to maintain that this world of sin and evil is governed by a good God is too glaring a paradox. Hardly less a paradox is it, if we think of

the thirty years of Christ's life on earth, or the three years of His public ministry, or perhaps even the three hours on the cross, merely as an interlude in an eternity of glorious enjoyment removed from all contact with sin and pain. But if we think of the life and passion of Christ, not as an interlude, but as being to us the most complete, and indeed the *final* manifestation, of an element which is essential and eternal in the Divine life—and therefore one essential in the highest human life—it is as though a flash-light had been suddenly turned on to the darkest corner of existence; questionings are answered, things are explained. So felt the Evangelist, and wrote, "in him . . . is light."

But at this point a difficulty arises. Christianity is here making an affirmation about the existence and nature of God; and that means about the ultimate constitution of Reality: and the philosopher has a right, or rather is in duty bound, to say that here it trenches on metaphysics, and therefore comes within *his* purview. Moreover, Christianity is here making an affirmation about the life of an

historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, Who lived in Judaea at a certain date; the historian and his ally, the critic of ancient documents, have at this point, equally with the philosopher, a claim to be heard. Here at last, then, we seem to reach a point where the plain man cannot do without the expert; where little children would seem to have to wait for the verdicts of philosophers, historians and critics, before they can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. That their verdicts have no bearing upon the situation I would be the last to affirm; but I believe that, if we look a little deeper, we may see that, what philosophers and critics have to tell us, is still on the circumference and not at the centre of Christianity. In other words, there is open to little children a means of verification, which is independent of the verdict of scholars and historians; a means, which may turn out after all to be the better way, and which may even reveal to babes things, which have escaped, and are likely to escape, the wise and understanding: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. . ."

In the past those who have endeavoured to carry out His will, and have by so doing attained the conviction that the doctrine is of God, have felt acutely how unpalatable and absurd a precept, the following of Christ seems on the face of it to be ; and how entirely contrary the cross of Christ is to the wisdom of this world, what a stumbling block to one and what arrant foolishness to another. Hence, in commending the following of Christ to others, they have shrunk from relying on the single argument that they themselves, and the saints throughout the centuries, have trod this path, and have thereby found it to be the way of life. They have, not unnaturally, endeavoured to bolster up their convictions and to satisfy, perhaps in the first place their own minds, but still more the minds of those whom they wished to help, by falling back upon external proofs and confirmations, arguments from metaphysics or from history. Most of all, perhaps, they have been prone to rely upon the argument from miracles, oblivious that, in so doing, they were turning a deaf ear to the warning of the Master Himself, that "If they hear not Moses and the

prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

But to-day they can no longer use these old supports. The old metaphysic, which was to prove by irrefutable logic the existence of God, has broken down. Its place has been taken by various systems; of which some do, and some do not, affirm the existence of God, but of which it can at least be said that the doctors, in differing from one another, produce such cogent grounds for doing so, that he who is compelled to rely on the consensus of the experts will get little satisfaction. Again, controversy is acute as to whether or no the Gospel miracles can be accepted in their literal sense. It cannot be denied that on both sides there are men of learning, ability, and genuine religious conviction. One side may be right, or the other; probably both are defending principles, intellectual or religious, of which a satisfactory synthesis will some day be discovered. It is obvious, however, that, so long as this state of things lasts, it is fruitless to give to the man who doubts an evidence or a proof based on something, which is in itself still more in need of proof.

This general weakening of metaphysical proofs and historical evidences is regarded by many with trepidation and dismay. I believe myself it is a real gain, for it is forcing Christians to re-examine their convictions, and the Christian, who re-examines his convictions, is likely to emerge with the courage of them.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." The appeal is to the life's experience of the religious man: and not merely to the experience of the isolated individual, but to that of the whole company of those, who in all countries and in all ages have tried to follow Christ. It is the strongest appeal of all; "I had almost said even as they, but lo! then should I have condemned the generation of thy children." Any appeal to the authority of a consensus of metaphysicians or historians is answered by a confused buzz of multifarious whisperings, "*quot homines, tot sententiae*"; but an appeal to the witness of the followers of Christ, to the *consensus sanctorum* of all the Churches and all the Ages, elicits an answer like the voice of a trumpet, and it gives no uncertain sound.

"Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
Is He sure to bless?
Angels, Martyrs, Prophets, Virgins
Answer 'Yes!'"

It tells us that if we follow Christ we inevitably attain a freedom and a fullness of life hitherto not experienced, and that this is accompanied by an opening of the eyes, a quickening of the spiritual sense, a training of the moral "taste," or whatever one may choose to call it, which enables us to see by direct perception that this *is* the highest and best life.

Again, this consensus assures us that the nature of things is such that it responds to and feeds this life, and is wont to give us more than we either desire or deserve, leading us on from life to more life. Thus the practical test of experience proves that this life is in conformity with the ultimate power behind the Universe, and that it is not merely opined by certain individuals to be the highest and happiest life, but that the set of the current, so to speak, of the life of the Universe is shewn to move in the same direction. In other words, both by a judgment of worth and

by a judgment of experiment, it is vindicated as akin to the life of God.

Beyond and more than this, myriads of the saints tell us that this contact with the life of God has been experienced as a personal presence and communion with the Divine. It is easy to say that such an experience is an illusion, but in view of its extent in the matter of time and race and place, and in view of the character and achievements of many of those, in whose lives it has been the central and dominant experience, I would submit that the burden of proof lies with those who would reject, rather than with those who would accept, their testimony.

"Knowledge puffeth up," says the Apostle, and it is quite possible that in some cases the possession of a wealth of scholarship or philosophy may actually be a hindrance to that practical and experimental approach to religion which comes naturally and easily to simpler minds, and that it may be literally true that the wise and understanding are particularly liable to overlook the things which are revealed to babes. To enter the Kingdom of Heaven we not only *may* but *must* become as little children.

But it does not follow that we must remain such. σοφίαν λαλοῦμεν ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, "We have a Philosophy for the initiated," says St. Paul. Religion has room for, nay rather it has need of, Philosophy, and never more so than to-day, when its old Philosophy, its traditional Theology, is breaking down. But I would venture the opinion that Philosophy has even greater need to study the data of Religion. Philosophy fails in its task unless it is a synthesis of all experience; and if in its hierarchy of correlated experiences it should omit, or wrongly place, the experience vouched for by Religion, it may haply prove to have left out, or to have built in awry, the Keystone of the arch of Knowledge.

(IV)

Up to this point the result of our reflections is this: Christianity tells us that if we love God with all our heart and with all our mind, and if we love our neighbour as ourselves, and if this love issues in a passion for service, which lightly and cheerfully carries any cross, and which, if need be, will shrink not from the supreme sacrifice of all, we shall find that

we have attained that peace which the world cannot give, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." Not only that; we shall find that we have attained also a direct, intuitive knowledge of God, an apprehension of, and an insight into, the ultimate nature of Reality, fuller and more secure than anything that can be reached by any purely intellectual process.

But a great difficulty presents itself. Grant, for the sake of argument, that the Christian teaching is true; grant that, if our hearts were filled with the love of God and man which Christ had, and if we led the life which Christ led, we should achieve the end alleged; still, the *if* is too big an *if*, the condition is one we are in no wise able to fulfil. Thus the seeming simplicity of the Christian message turns out to be an illusion after all; for if the attainment of the end is only possible to one, whose moral character is already like that of Christ, salvation is no more accessible to the ordinary man than if it were required of him that he should have all knowledge and understand all mysteries, and be a master of philosophy, history, and science. Indeed, the intellect of

an Aristotle, or of an Aquinas, is more common than a character like that of Jesus Christ.

To this difficulty, also, Christianity has a reply. If it be asked, "And who is sufficient for these things?" the reply is frankly: "Of himself, no man." But to every man, if he is willing to resort thereto, there is open access to a limitless source of Divine assistance: "Not I, but the grace of God that is in me"; "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

As a matter of fact we do *not* love God. At best, we have a rather spasmodic and lukewarm devotion to some one or two manifestations of the Divine, to one or two ideals. And we do *not* love man. At best, we love a certain number of selected individuals, while for as many others, if not for more, we have a very opposite sentiment. Here is the root of all the trouble, and here at the very bottom the change must come. "Unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

The change is a radical one—how is it to be brought about? "The wind bloweth where it listeth": to one man a sudden crisis, to another a succession of imperceptible in-

fluences, kindles in the soul a small and flickering flame—the hope, the wish to obey, or perhaps merely to consider seriously, the Christian call. "He that hath, to him shall be given." "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you; seek, and ye shall find." That is the law that holds with regard to all things human, whether in the sphere of knowledge or of art or of practical endeavour. Aspiration must come first; then concentration of interest; then effort of the will. No door is opened to man unless he knocks; only if he seeks does he find; and the greatest things of all are rarely found except when many together have long been seeking with a corporate effort.

What wonder, then, if the same law holds good in religion also. Only if we ask do we receive; only if two or three or, it may be, a multitude are gathered together in His name, are the greatest things received. But wherever, either individually or in union, men cease not to ask, the nature of things is such—so the saints tell us, so to some small extent our own experience verifies—that it is responsive. Aspiration is answered by realisation, study by

illumination, effort by enhanced power. Once turn our thoughts in this direction, once turn our steps along this road, and practical experience shows that there is given to us—not indeed everything, nor all at once, but something to begin with. That something may, at the start, be but as a grain of mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds; but, slowly in one soil, quickly in another, it grows into a tree, which is found to be the tree of life.

Prayer, meditation, work—these, we are told, are the keys to unlock the gate, the gate that at first seems strait, that leadeth unto life. A word may be said with regard to each of these.

Prayer is too often taken to mean a reeling off of strings of petitions for personal needs; almost, as it were, a worrying of God. But Christ said, "Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." Prayer has been better defined as "aspiration in the sight of God." We need to remember that the prayer that was given us as a model, begins on this note: "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

From another point of view prayer is the placing of the soul in an attitude of receptivity towards the influence of the Divine. "Knock and it shall be opened" represents a human aspiration, which has its essential counterpart in the attitude of God Himself, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." That is to say, the Life which pulsates through the Universe, or, in Christian language, the Love of God, is not a passive thing or a grudging thing; it is active, creative, restorative, going out into the wilderness, as in the familiar parable, "to seek and to save that which is lost." This is part of what is meant by the Bread and the Wine, which are for us the Body and the Blood of Christ. If for men it is more blessed to give than to receive, so must it also be for God. But you cannot give to those who will not take, and no man can be saved except with his own consent. Prayer, then, in one of its most essential aspects, is the unlocking of the door of the heart, a door that often moves on grating and on rusty hinges; it is the opening

of the shutter, which lets in the light; it is the effecting of the contact, which sends the electric current through the metal. Hence it is a fine instinct which has led the Church to begin the most central portion of her most solemn rite with the immemorial words of invitation and response:—"Lift up your hearts." "We lift them up unto the Lord."

One thing more. The lifting up of the heart with the aspiration, "Thy Kingdom come," and the answering influx of the Spirit of Him who loved His neighbour as Himself, cannot be a selfish or self-centred act. It need not necessarily articulate itself at all; it may be at times just a silent waiting upon God; but when it does become articulate, it must necessarily be prayer for others, intercession as it is called, as much and as definitely as for oneself. And, as a matter of fact, whether it is because when we pray for others we are less blind to their real and highest needs, than we are when we pray for ourselves, or whether it is because such prayers, being more disinterested, are more truly prayers "in His name," it is the experience of many, with whom I have spoken on this subject, that

such prayers are answered too often and in too striking a way to make the hypothesis of coincidence at all a possible explanation.

Meditation has always been spoken of by the saints as a road of communication with the Divine, akin to prayer. It is my own belief that thought, study and the disinterested pursuit of truth, even when not consciously dominated by what is conventionally known as a religious motive, are, to many minds, really only another form of that effort towards personal contact with the Highest Being, which is the essential element in prayer. Thought directed towards things eternal is, I would urge, a form of prayer; to some men it is the easiest, if not the only possible, form; yet, seeing that thought is the activity of only one side of the nature of man, it is, if not supplemented by the activity to which the name "prayer" is more commonly applied, an imperfect form. But I also believe—and it is the tradition of the great Masters of Prayer—that prayer, in the restricted sense of petition, is also, if practised alone, imperfect. It requires to be supplemented by meditation, that is, by thought about things eternal. There are

many who find that to begin each day with meditation upon the great ideas suggested by some passage of the Bible, accompanied by prayer,—the "morning watch" as it is sometimes called—attunes the mind and spirit to the practical labours and tasks of the day, and gives them a power to rise above irritations and worries, to an extent which surpasses the belief of those who have not tried the practice. And I venture to think that many to whom this particular counsel, through their long disuse of such specifically religious activities, would be uncongenial or impossible, might make trial of the method by making it a rule to begin every day with the contemplation of things eternal, through the medium of some other great literature or some specimen of great art.

Laborare est orare. Work, undertaken, not in the grudging and resentful spirit of one who hastens to complete his tale of bricks at the tyrant's bidding, but inspired by the conception of duty recognised as service, albeit sometimes a humble and uninspiring type of service—work, seen in supreme moments to be more than this, to be the privilege of co-oper-

ation with Him who said: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work"—is the last, but not the least, of the three main avenues by which man can consciously seek God. For here the aspiration which is the source of prayer, the concentration and illumination which are the goal of meditation, are most completely translated into act.

The first instinct of humanity is to make the act everything, but reflection soon shows the shallowness of this.

> "Not always actions show the man, we find;
> Who does a kindness is not always kind."

Next, by an acute reaction, it is affirmed that it is only the spiritual that matters. "What has morality to do with religion?" cries the Antinomian.

> ἡ γλῶσσ' ὁμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος.

The last stage is to realise that, though the spiritual is first, it does not realise its potentiality until it is embodied in act; even as Christ not only loved men, but actually died for them; and as the Word of God become flesh had to be made perfect by suffering.

Work, then, is the last of the main ways in which man can actively seek God : there are other ways by which at times God seeks him —suffering, for instance, is often one—but these do not concern us now. And work is also the way which is commonly the most conspicuously successful. For, as the old Greek thinker had discovered, character is moulded along the lines of action ; by doing the thing you ought to do, you become the thing you ought to be. The doing or, it may be, the refraining, which at first, perhaps, was hard, becomes with every successful effort less hard, and the character in regard to that particular effort becomes stronger ; this in turn makes the doing easier, and so on—"sic itur ad astra." Effort at every step is met by redoubled grace. But the process, though sure, is slow. "Building up" is the metaphor used by St. Paul. It is only brick by brick that a tower rises ; but brick by brick means, eventually, storey by storey, and at every storey the view from the top is wider and more magnificent. That is an allegory of man's knowledge of the Divine.

(V)

The moral ideal is not like a target which, if a man miss, he has indeed failed of his object, but has at least done no positive harm. It is rather as if every bullet, which missed the mark, wounded some innocent onlooker, and at the same time unnerved the marksman himself, so that his aim became less steady than before. Moreover, since to live is to act, the contest is one from which no competitor can withdraw. The struggle is inevitable, the result of failure disastrous, and the law ever holds good that "from him that hath not is taken away even that which he hath." Yet again, my wrong-doing does not merely cause loss or pain to others, and greater moral enfeeblement in myself, it commonly produces moral detriment as well in others. Injustice not only causes injury, it usually breeds hatred also; cruelty not only causes suffering, it also as a rule creates in the party wronged a vengeful spirit, and often an indifference to, or even a delight in, the pain of others which perpetuates still further cruelties.

Yet, in spite of these indisputable facts,

Society exists and life is possible. Moreover, though doubts may be entertained by some as to the present tendencies of civilisation, Progress in the past from Savagery to Civilisation has been a fact; and there are few who are willing to surrender the hope that the process, possibly with occasional set backs, will continue in the future. But the mere continued existence of Society, let alone the possibility of Progress, is testimony that there must be somewhere at work in the world a Curative Principle. Of the working of a recuperative and restorative activity in the physical organism of man or animal, physiologists tell us many wonderful things. Without this no living organism could survive. It would seem that, since social life depends in the last resort upon character, Society itself would be impossible unless in the social organism also—whether there already or introduced from without—there were at work in the moral sphere an analogous Curative Principle.

"He was in the world, and the world knew Him not." It is the affirmation of Christianity, that, always and everywhere, there has been working in the world an eternal divine prin-

ciple, creative and restorative of life and illumination; that in the Life and Death of Christ this principle was for the first time clearly seen in its inmost nature; that on the succession through the ages of His true followers, as being "the salt of the earth," is laid, principally at any rate, the task of continuing to exhibit and to mediate the principle of this preservative and quickening process, which was in His act once and for all fully shown forth.

Christ died, and His followers toil and pray, to forward the coming of the Kingdom of God, that is for the corporate regeneration of mankind—a process having its beginning in this world, but extending beyond the present life. But corporate regeneration has no meaning without individual regeneration; though, as men are coming more and more to realise, individual salvation cannot be complete until corporate regeneration is accomplished. Men cannot "enter heaven alone," yet they must be saved one by one. "Unless a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Only "if we confess our sins" is He "faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

The Church of England has wisely declined to accept the theory held by many Christians that individual regeneration can be brought about only if initiated by a single spiritual crisis or "Conversion"; or the view of many others that continuance and renewal of the higher life is normally effected only through Sacramental Absolution. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and there are multitudes to whom the Kingdom of God within cometh indeed, but "not with observation." But whether it operates through spiritual crisis, through sacrament, or through a hidden inner growth, it cannot be gainsaid that there is a power—most conspicuously, though not exclusively, working through the *conscious* acceptance of the Christian message—which enables blinded and habit-fettered souls to break free from the bondage of their own past acts, to throw off the clogging influence of the false standards and low ideals, which have become part of their very self, and to face life anew in the conviction that they have been given "power to become the sons of God." The Creative and Curative Principle in the Universe, which has made possible the existence,

first of physical life itself, then of human society; which completely revealed Itself as the life-giving Love of God, manifested above all in the voluntary death of Christ; avails also for the individual soul, "for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

(VI)

Meagre and outlined though it professes to be, I shall be told there has been one great and unpardonable omission in this sketch that I have attempted of the simplest essentials of Christianity. I have spoken only of the following of Christ and the knowledge of God in this world; is it not of the essence of Christianity that it looks beyond this world? "Granting us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting" we pray, but, in your outline, what, it will be asked, has become of the second half of the petition?

The answer I would give to this question is a quotation from St. John's Gospel: "This is life eternal that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst

send, even Jesus Christ." Christian speculation has framed highly elaborate pictures of Heaven, Purgatory, Hell; but in the words of our Lord all this elaboration is conspicuously absent. And this cannot be by accident, for contemporary Jewish Apocalyptic had already provided an abundant store of those luxuriant images, which Medieval thought was destined later on to adopt and systematise. To Christ the *fact* of Eternal Life is a necessary deduction from that other fact that God is a God in whose sight the individual is of infinite value, for "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, is not the God of the dead but of the living." If we ask the *manner* of it we shall turn to St. John's Gospel.

Eternal Life, we there find, is not something alien to this life and postponed to a future date; it is something which may begin here and now, although it will only realise its full potentialities in another and higher sphere. It consists in the knowledge and love of God in Christ, that is to say, in that full development of all the highest capacities of our nature, in that deepening insight into the nature of the Divine, and in that growing con-

viction of the certainty and reality of the Divine power and love, which, as we have seen above, constitute the essence of Christianity in this world. It follows, then, that in exact proportion to the development along this line which a man attains in this world, will be the depth of his insight into the nature of the life beyond this world; and along with growing insight into its nature there will inevitably go a growing conviction of its certainty.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

II

AUTHORITY, REUNION AND TRUTH

THE first object of religion is to save a man from himself, but, it is obvious, that this cannot be done by a religion of his own make. The religion must be there already, voicing its categorical imperative, whether he hear it or no, whether he like it or no.

Yet, again, religion is largely concerned with the nature of the Unseen. On this subject, the individual, left to himself, will be exceedingly fortunate, if he succeed in making a few happy conjectures, which can be partially verified in the fragmentary experience of his individual life.

For these two reasons, the principle of authority must necessarily occupy a far more important place in religion than in any other department of thought or life. But,

in religion, as in every other department, authority by itself can, at most, procure acquiescence. Conviction only results when a certain amount of understanding or personal verification is present also. "We believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard for ourselves, and know . . . ." I cannot, indeed, be saved by a religion of my own make; but neither can any religion help me except just in so far as I make it my own—which means that I must remake it for myself; and no two men will do this in just the same way.

One point, however, must not be overlooked. The "I believe," which is the fundamental affirmation of Christianity, does not merely mean that I accept as true this or that statement about God or Christ, whether I do so on authority or as the result of personal investigation. "Thou believest that God is one: thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." The faith that justifies, as St. Paul would call it, is far more than this; it is a passion; it involves all that is meant by loyalty to and trust in a person, by absorption in an ideal, by devotion to a cause. Like ideal love or friendship, it does

not admit the possibility of doubt. Yet this certainty cannot be entirely justified on purely intellectual grounds. The religious man admits without hesitation that the intellectual arguments for the existence of God or, at least, of a God of the kind he worships, fall short of demonstration; yet he does not therefore describe his belief in God as "an hypothesis in process of verification." The Christian is aware that the infallibility of the historical records of the life of Christ is questioned by the majority of competent scholars; he does not therefore speak of belief in Christ as resting upon a convergence of historical probabilities. But, then, neither does he apply words like "hypothesis" or "probability" to his belief in the honour of his wife or of his oldest friend; though it might be hard, on the plane of formal logic, to justify the use of any other language.

Thus it is essential to realise that in religion, personal appropriation and verification are far more than purely intellectual processes, and conviction is far more than mere intellectual assent. But it is equally vital to

insist that, without intellectual assent, conviction is impossible. The intellectual powers of individuals, and the degree of their intellectual interest, vary immensely. Moreover, the intellectual powers and interests of one man may have been trained and directed towards practical activities, those of another towards speculative. The intellectual outlook of the philosopher, of the merchant, and of the peasant have been developed in very different directions and to a very different extent. But each of them, if he really believe, must and should believe with all the specific quality of intellect he has. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," not only "with all thy heart and with all thy strength," but also "with all thy *mind*."

Hence, no religion can expect to survive, unless it can express its fundamental convictions in such a way as to show them to be intrinsically reasonable. By which, of course, I mean, not that they must be mathematically proved, but that they must be shown to be at least probable on intellectual grounds. Faith can accept things which are as yet unproved; but to cling to what in your heart of hearts

you suspect of being disproved is not faith, but mere delusion.

But the range of human knowledge is continually expanding; hence beliefs, or, rather, I would say particular ways of expressing beliefs, which were at one time in full harmony with the rest of the sum total of what was known about science, history, psychology, etc., and which were therefore then entirely reasonable, are now seen to be in conflict with the new knowledge. When this happens—supposing always that the conflict is with a considered and established result, not merely with the latest and as yet unverified hypothesis in some department—the only alternatives open are, either to surrender a belief altogether, or, if in other respects there are strong grounds for accepting it, to find some new way of explaining or expressing the substance of it, which will make it fit in with the rest of what is now known to be fact.

Sometimes this readjustment is comparatively simple, at other times it is difficult. Where this is the case it is not likely that a complete and satisfactory solution will be reached all at once. One experimental

solution must be put forward by one man, another by another; as a result of general discussion and mutual criticism, these will be rejected or amended until, at last, one is found which commends itself to general acceptance.

Such a process is often slow, and to those who live in the midst of it, it does not always seem over sure. But "he that believeth shall not make haste," and to be in a hurry for truth is the worst way to get to your goal. But this lesson is one hard to be learned; man is by nature impatient, especially when vital issues are at stake; and, while the search for truth is going slowly on, there is no truce in the battle with sin, within us or without. Hence I do not wonder that there are some whose hearts fail them, and who cry out for some certain and final expression and delimitation of truth and bid us, in despite of reason, trust in some infallible authority; and, since the infallibility of the Bible seems to have broken down, urge us to go back to the Middle Ages and find an infallible guide in ancient dogma, or in modern Pope.

It is an easy and a comforting solution, and

it holds out the hope of rest to weary souls. Yes, but may it not be too easy and too comfortable? The Church of Christ was surely never meant to be, intellectually any more than morally, a Lotus-eaters' paradise. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the road" was not spoken of the way, that leadeth unto life.

May it not be that it was desirable, or even necessary, for the full spiritual development of the race, that the theory of infallibility, whether of Bible or Church, should have been forcibly exploded at the present stage of human development? A wise parent slackens the discipline of the home as his children begin to grow up; a wise teacher at a certain point ceases to impart information and tries rather to guide his pupils to experiment and find out for themselves.

It is, moreover, too often forgotten that many men—most men, I had almost said—find it doubly hard, if not impossible, to realise and accept as true anything, which is put before them with the demand that it be accepted *in toto* on external and infallible authority. Truth is, no doubt, objective; but the realisation of truth by the individual is

impossible without the free and spontaneous activity of his own reason and powers of perception. This experience is the exact parallel, in the intellectual sphere, of the experience in the moral sphere, to which St. Paul has given classical expression. If morality is presented to the individual as Law, that is, as a peremptory, external command, instead of as being the expression in outward act of a principle of righteousness personally appropriated by himself, then its observance is made doubly hard. "If the Law had not said, 'thou shalt not covet,' I had not known covetousness," says St. Paul. Just so many a man to-day is saying, "If Dogma had not said, 'thou shalt believe,' I had never known doubt."

It is this experience which lies behind the popular railing against Dogma. But if by dogma, we mean merely a definite expression of belief in intellectual terms, some dogma is indispensable, even if it be only the elementary dogma that God is One. But when Dogma is put forward as an infallibility, in the spirit of a legalism applied to the intellectual sphere, as unfortunately is too often the case, it deserves the opprobrium with which it is

commonly regarded. Infallibility is the tyrant's claim; that we do not want; but we do want authority, the parent's right—a sign-post to point the direction, a lantern to illumine the road, which leads to the city of Truth.

Nevertheless the strictly authoritarian position is being thrust before men's notice to-day, by the glamour and prestige of the name of Rome, and by the vigorous advocacy of men able and sincere in our own communion; and it appeals not only to the innate sloth of human nature, but also to that impulse to complete surrender which lies close to the heart of all real religion. Accordingly I make no apology for offering one or two criticisms, trite and obvious as they may seem to some, of the arguments commonly urged in its favour, before going on to indicate what I believe to be a better way.

The logical arguments in defence of authoritarianism I will not stay to examine. After all, there must be *some* fallacy in any process of reasoning which ends by discrediting reason; for if reason is discredited, the reasoning which is supposed to prove it to be so, is itself

discredited in advance. Moreover, I do not believe that such logical arguments are really the grounds, which determine the beliefs, even of those who use them.

The authoritarian position really makes its appeal far more to psychological than to logical considerations, and these, in the last resort, resolve themselves into two main propositions:

(1) The plain man wants something definite.

(2) Religion demands a fixed and unalterable certainty; but when once you begin to criticise and enquire, uncertainty creeps in. And although to-day the results of such enquiry may not, perhaps, seem too subversive, how do you know what they will be to-morrow? Where are you going to end?

I hope, later on, to indicate where we *do* find a point of final and unalterable certainty, and where, so far as I can judge, the quest for truth is likely to lead us. For the moment I would only pause to suggest that the cry "Where are you going to end?" has a somewhat timorous note. Is it not rather like saying: "I assure you this is perfectly true, but please, dear friends, don't ask to look

and see? Christianity is a tender plant and might not thrive in the open air."

A religion which requires this sort of hot-house nursing may possibly be true; but there is not much Gospel in it. For, observe, the question is, not where this individual or that is going to end, but, where the Church will end. Christianity is truly in a bad way if we have not the courage to believe that the corporate sense of the Church will be able to extract every grain of truth there is in the views and experiments of individuals, and to discard whatever is false. Was not the promise given to the Church, "The Spirit shall lead you into all truth"? But this promise, like every other promise of Divine help, is conditional upon men doing their best to deserve it; and the Church will only be led towards truth in proportion as she desires to get there. "Knock and it shall be opened to you, seek and ye shall find." Those who are afraid of truth, or of what truth may cost them, will never see it; and the worst way to find a thing is to begin by refusing to look for it. Truth *is* to be found, but only by those who are prepared, if need be, to seek it

in the spirit of the evangelic precept, "Leave all and follow Me."

But to return to the former proposition: "The plain man wants something definite." No doubt he does; and if the theologian can supply the want so much the better. But if it is meant that truth is to be adapted and accommodated, like a patent medicine, to meet the popular demand, it seems to me very like an invitation to frame a theology on the principle of asking, "How much will Jones swallow?"—a procedure which I am given to understand is objected to by others besides myself.[1]

But at this point I should like to raise the question: What is the difference between the plain man and such highly sophisticated and academic persons as myself—and Mr. Knox? And the answer is quite simple, viz., that when it comes to the fundamental needs of religion and the kind of answer that will satisfy them, there is simply no difference at all. If the plain man is the man who feels the problem of evil—in the world and in the

[1] Cf. *Some Loose Stones*, by R. A. Knox, Ch. I., where this is alleged to be the method of the authors of *Foundations*.

self—the mystery of the universe, the feebleness of man's unaided intellect to pierce its meaning, I am the plain man. If Jones is the name of the man who wants certainty, who wants definiteness, I am Jones. But there is one thing that I need more than I need definition, and that is truth. And the answers which Mr. Knox would have me accept are, no doubt, definite enough; but they seem to me, at any rate in the form in which he states them, to be definitely untrue; and the authority on which I am asked to take them is one which has time and again, on definite points, been definitely proved mistaken.

The plea that simple minds want simple fare, and that therefore it is better to give them too much to believe than to risk their not believing at all, is the subtlest temptation that assails the priest.

"Something we *may* see, all we cannot see.
What need of lying! I say, I see all,
And swear to each detail the most minute
In what I think a Pan's face—you, mere cloud:
I swear I hear him speak and see him wink,
For fear if once I drop the emphasis,
Mankind may doubt there is a cloud at all."

Put in this naked form few, I suppose, would entertain the idea, but it always lurks subconsciously behind that plea for definition at all costs. Let us aim at being definite by all means, but never at the expense of truth. How this can be done I shall endeavour to point out later.

The idea that the plain man needs definition more than he needs truth has been the degradation of both politics and religion. "Vult populus decipi, decipiatur." And, putting it on the lowest ground, it does not pay. "You can deceive all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you can't deceive all the people all the time." A plausible generalisation, a clever "cry," may win an election, or even two. But a man's religion has got to last longer than a couple of Parliaments, and if you have won him on false pretences, he will have time to find you out. "The one grace," it has been said, "which the Church never seems to reach, is veracity. But for a teacher veracity is *the* essential grace: the Church must reach it or she must die."

About two and a half years ago I had

occasion to study carefully the answers to a questionnaire, sent out by the Student Movement, making enquiries as to the exact nature of the religious doubts and difficulties, which experience showed to be actually entertained. The answers came from very different sources, from laymen and clerics, Churchmen and Nonconformists; some replies referred to the working classes, some to the suburbs, some to the student world; but the striking thing was that on one point they were nearly all agreed, viz., that the number of those who have clear, definite and intelligent doubts or difficulties with regard to definite points of belief is, in all circles, a minority, though a very influential one. The doubts of the majority are vague and undefined—a vague doubt as to whether Christianity is really any good goes along with an equally vague doubt as to whether it is really true.

Again, there was an almost equal unanimity among the replies, as to the main reasons for this state of things. The ordinary man doubts the *good* of Christianity, because the average professing Christian seems to be so little better than anybody else, while so

many of those whose character he admires are not professing Christians at all. And he doubts the *truth* of Christianity, because he sees that it is doubted by so many who have better brains than himself, whom he believes to be seekers after truth—by the leading scientist, by the eminent doctor, by the distinguished scholar or man of letters. In other words, the majority of men accept their doubts, as they accept their beliefs, largely on authority. But the point to notice is on *what* authority.

The plain man relies upon authority to guide and help him; and if the authority can give him something definite he likes it all the better; but the authority he respects is not that of œcumenical councils or antiquarian precedents, but the opinion of the men whose character he respects, or of the men whom he believes to put truth before all else. To take a concrete instance. Sir Oliver Lodge from time to time makes pronouncements of a theological nature, and so do various eminent ecclesiastics; but the pronouncements which the ordinary man takes most seriously are not those

of the ecclesiastics. I do not say that the ordinary man is right in this; I merely say that, in point of fact, he does so. And his reason is simply this: he believes that ecclesiastics are primarily interested in tradition, and Sir Oliver Lodge in truth. So long as so many men of the noblest character, and so long as a majority (and that *is* the case to-day) of those whose first passion is the search for truth, are known to stand outside the Church, she has little hope of the allegiance of the plain man. The average man is not a fool, and his position is simply this—a religion, which is not good enough for the best men, is not good enough for me. The Church will command authority when she includes all the best men, not before.

And how is this to come about? Let there be no mistake. It is no use starting a campaign to "capture" the best men, as the phrase goes. The best men are not to be captured. There is only one way. The Church must, in the first place, show that she possesses a burning passion for righteousness. But you cannot show a thing until it is there to be shown; and it will

not be there, till there is far more humility, far more thought, far more self-sacrifice, and far more prayer than there is at present. In the second place, she must show that she really believes in truth. And to believe in truth means to be ready to believe that your present ideas may be wrong, that the views you inherited from your fathers may require revision ; it means being ready to say things which may lose you friendships, things which will offend people whom you know to be both wiser and better than yourself, things which, when you have done all, you know are only likely to be half-truths. Righteousness is for every member of the Church, the search for truth must be left to the few, and results will only be reached by the Church as a whole when different individuals specialise, to some extent, in sub-departments. But when once it is clear that the Church as a corporate body is equally in earnest after righteousness and truth, there will be no need to " capture " the best men. They will not consent to stand outside.

In the answers to the questionnaire I have mentioned, great stress was laid on one more

point. The authority of the Church is weak, not only because so many of those who love righteousness and ensue truth stay outside, but because the Church herself is divided into a hundred portions, each of which impugns the claim of the other to have and to teach the truth. It follows that the authority of the Church will be little more than a paper authority, until the question of Christian unity is settled.

Well, we have reached the first stage in solving that problem; we have begun to *wish* it solved. We go about saying that every section of the Church stands for some aspect of truth, and that somehow the united Church has got to include, in all its fullness, every one of these aspects.

To have reached the stage when we recognise that there is truth in the positions of those who differ from us is, no doubt, a great advance; but how far does it carry us? It sounds very nice and genial to say, "We all stand for truth of a sort: let us slap one another on the back all round, and say, after 'Alice in Wonderland,' '*Everybody* has won, and all must have prizes.'" But "truth of a

sort" is not what we want, and when A's truth looks very like the contradictory of B's, it makes the onlooker pause. There is something more to do. A century ago we were all eyes for the errors of every religious body but our own; to-day we are recognising the truth in one another's positions; but there is one more stage, and that is for each to awaken to the *errors* in his *own* views—and that is the hardest stage of all.

"As the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch* have erred;" says the XIXth Article, with admirable complacency, "so also the Church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith." And is it likely that the Church of England is wholly right, that the Presbyterians have made no mistake, that the Congregationalists have avoided every error? No. Different religious bodies stand for different aspects of the truth, but they also stand for different aspects of error. Get rid of the errors, and the different aspects of truth will fit into one another like the different parts of a picture puzzle. The magnitude of truth, no doubt, is such that it

is impossible for any one man, or perhaps even for any one community, to grasp it whole; but this is not what keeps us apart; at bottom what separates us is our manifold misconception of truth. Men say it is their principles that keep them apart; they forget the possibility that principles may need revision.

We come back, then, to the same point. For practical purposes the authority of the Church must await re-union, and re-union must await the clearer delimitation of truth. Truth then is the first thing of all.

But this brings us face to face with a question of fundamental importance. Our first and greatest need is truth, but the question arises, by what methods or from what sources can truth be attained? Are the methods of philosophic reasoning and scientific research the only way, or is there also an alternative and in some ways a surer method?

Of the answer which the Biblical writers give to this question there can be no manner of doubt. "Thus saith the Lord" names the Source from which the Prophets of the Old Testament believed they derived their

message. Christ Himself, at any rate as reported in the Synoptic Gospels, never argues or theologises, He simply states. "I think too," says St. Paul, "that I have the Spirit of the Lord." "The Spirit shall lead you into all truth" is the conviction of St. John.

Inspiration is the familiar word to describe the gift here postulated — a word which emphasises its Divine side. But I think the problem involved will be clearer to most of us if we substitute a word describing it from the human standpoint, such as "spiritual insight" or "direct intuition." To speak of it only from its Divine side, is to emphasise unduly the distinction between religious and other knowledge. For in every department of knowledge undiscovered truth is always there, "staring us in the face" as we say, pressing in upon us, but only the few have eyes to see and ears to hear.

The claim, then, is made that certain individuals have made what, in other spheres, we should call "discoveries"; that they have attained a certain kind of knowledge of God and His ways by direct intuition. Can this claim be made good? The question is fundamental.

But it is also important to notice that it is implied,—far more clearly, no doubt, in the New Testament than in the Old,—that this faculty resides not only in the specially gifted individual, but, at any rate in a diffused state, in the community as a corporate whole; the Spirit, which is to "guide you into all truth," resides in the Church, and the Apostle's word is not only "I know" but "we know." The claim, then, to possess this supra-rational means of knowledge of the Divine, not only covers the claim of the Bible to be inspired, but also logically implies a similar claim on behalf of the corporate mind of the Church. We may perhaps distinguish biblical inspiration as creative and the inspiration of the Church as interpretative, but they are not different in kind. It is also worth while remarking that this same claim has, by implication, a bearing on the question of the validity of the spiritual experience of the individual as a means of access to truth.

It will be sufficient, therefore, to examine the validity of the claim of the Biblical writers to possess this faculty; and then to discuss the limitations under which it appears to be exer-

cised by them. For, *mutatis mutandis*, the same considerations will determine the capacity of the Church, and of the individual also, to attain, or at least to judge of, truth by other than purely rational processes.

Let us, then, consider first what, in sum total, is the knowledge on the subject, which the writers of the Old Testament and the New Testament respectively profess to have attained.

The message of the Old Testament is in essence simply this :—the Unity of God, the Righteousness of God, and the promise that, though at present many facts of experience disguise it, the time will come when He will vindicate His Righteousness by redeeming that remnant of His people who are truly faithful.

The message of the New Testament adds to this, that the promise of the Old Testament has been largely fulfilled, for God *has* visited and redeemed His people, but that there are yet better things to come. To go more into detail; there is our Lord's teaching as to the true nature of God, the true nature of morality, the true nature of the Kingdom of

God ; and, in particular, concerning Himself, the promised Messiah, human, yet about to assume superhuman functions in a superhuman sphere, who by His Death (the *janua vitæ* to these superhuman activities) will bring about the great redemption. The primitive disciples, whose very life was the conviction that He was still with them, leading, informing, inspiring, tried to express more clearly to their own minds the implications of His Life and Death and Work, which He had Himself somewhat scantily outlined in the highly figurative and symbolic language of contemporary Jewish Apocalyptic. These implications, still struggling for expression in St. Paul, became most clearly explicit in the Fourth Gospel.

In brief it all comes to this. The Life of Christ on earth is a manifestation of the Nature and Life of God ; not, of course, an exhaustive, but a completely *adequate* manifestation, so far as is compatible with the limitation of the Word being made flesh. So also the Death of Christ is not merely the death of a martyr for a great cause—though, of course, it *is* that—but also the unique manifestation in time of an eternal activity of

the Divine for the effecting of man's redemption; with the corollary that this life is only the foretaste of something which will come to a fuller realisation in another sphere.

Now the results reached by the writers of the Old and New Testaments were not attained by philosophic analysis. We have, speaking merely from the human side, two factors and two only, viz.: on the one hand the religious community, a body of earnest men and women striving to frame their lives in accord with the Will of God, as far as they knew it, passionate in prayer, heroic in temptation and persecution; on the other hand the Prophet or Apostle, the inspired genius raised up to enable the community to attain a clear expression of that which it had experienced, or of that for which its spirit dimly groped.

It is, then, surely, a remarkable fact that results which were, as a matter of fact, gained in this intuitive way—mystical, supra-rational, unconsciously reasoning, or whatever one likes to name it—are found on examination to be in accordance with reason.

Take first the results reached in the Old

Testament, viz. ;—that God is One, and that God is Good. Polytheism, though, perhaps, the most widespread of human beliefs and lasting often to a late stage of civilisation, has become for us intellectually untenable ; and the view that the Ultimate Power behind the Universe, whatever its character, must, at any rate, be One, has become almost (I say advisedly "almost,") an axiom for modern thought. That this Power is also rational, though less generally admitted, has the great mass of philosophic opinion behind it. That this Power is also good is an opinion, which, on grounds of reason, has commended itself to at least the majority of thinkers, in spite of certain great difficulties that it involves, chief among which is the actual existence in the world of such an immense admixture of evil.

But the Old Testament revelation insistently proclaims itself to be incomplete ; it looks forward to something more which is yet to come. That something more is to be found in the New Testament conception, that in Christ we see God ; that is to say, that the Power behind the Universe Itself eternally

shares in the suffering, battles with the evil, swallows up the death in victory. There have been, and still are, many who regard this something more as *Aberglaube*, as a superstitious embroidery of the simpler Old Testament faith; and, no doubt, the traditional statements of the doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement, which represent the earlier attempts of the Church to find a philosophy of her religion, are so far out of touch with modern thought as to encourage this idea. But surely the conceptions which these doctrines endeavour, however inadequately, to express, are the one thing required to reconcile the actual existence of suffering and sin with that belief in the goodness of the Power behind things, which, on other grounds and in spite of that difficulty, philosophy has in the main felt itself driven to affirm.

Thus, to sum up, we find that the direct apprehension of Prophets and Apostles—whatever theory we may hold as to its nature and working—did, as a matter of historical fact, arrive at certain results, some of which are the same as those arrived at by the speculative reason, while others, which go

beyond the results attained by reason alone, are found to provide a reasonable solution of problems, which reason by itself has found insoluble.

Faith and reason have in the past been party battle-cries; and the psychological conditions and the implications for philosophy of this direct spiritual apprehension of the religious man have only recently begun to receive the serious and dispassionate attention of scientific thinkers; hence there are questions of fundamental importance, which have not as yet been thought out. Are we, for instance, to postulate a special faculty of religious knowledge, or is the activity under consideration to be regarded rather as a form of sub-conscious reasoning? Is the prophetic gift a case of the diffused reasoning or intuitions of the community becoming focussed and explicit in the inspired individual, or is it something purely individual? Again, what is the exact relation of the Hebrew prophets to the prophets of other races, and how are we to differentiate the comparative values of their several deliverances?

All these questions await solution, and

their solution will be of great value to theology; but, in the meantime, the facts and considerations I have adduced appear to put it beyond reasonable doubt that the Prophets and Apostles—explain it how you will—did, as a matter of fact, possess a power of direct spiritual apprehension, by means of which they attained results at least as valuable and as certain as those arrived at by pure reason—personally I would be bold to say, more valuable and more certain.

Granted this, it appears at once that the claim made for the Bible, that it involves a special inspiration and possesses special authority in matters of religion, rests on a solid and impregnable basis. But the one fatal mistake, which authority can make, is to push its claims too far and beyond its proper sphere; for this immediately leads to a revolt against it, even within its legitimate domain. We must, then, at once pause to consider the limitations of the Biblical authority involved in the above analysis.

(1) It is involved in the very nature of the directly perceptive knowledge of God

possessed by the Prophets, which, for want of a better name, we have called intuition, that it is an apprehension of fundamental principles, rather than a knowledge of details; a direct insight into the unseen, not a discursive acquaintance with the seen; a grasp of eternal moral and religious values, not a mastery of concrete facts. Hence there is no *a priori* reason whatever to suppose that the Prophets' knowledge of the kind of facts, with which history or science deals, would be in the slightest degree in advance of their own age. And, in point of fact, a cursory reading of the Bible shows that it was not.

(2) Unlike the Greek, the ancient Hebrew had no gift at all for philosophy, and in the Old Testament there is no attempt at a philosophy of religion, or at any metaphysical or rationalised explanation or justification of the beliefs so strongly entertained; there is not even any indication of a felt want of such a thing. The same is true of the bulk of the New Testament. Some of the language of St. Paul, interpreted from the point of view of later theology, has often been taken as

philosophic, but it is now coming to be seen that this is a mistake. His conception of the Person of Christ is in the main derived from contemporary Apocalyptic, which is picture thinking, not metaphysic; and his profoundest contributions to the philosophy of Christianity, as, for instance, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, are better regarded as the expression of the spiritual experience of the mystic, than as achievements of the ratiocination of the thinker. Still it is true that in St. Paul we do find for the first time in Hebrew literature a dimly felt need for a philosophy of religion. The one passage in the whole Bible, which deliberately attempts a metaphysic of religion, is the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel; and here too it is clear that the writer's interest is not primarily in the metaphysic as such. He starts like St. Paul with the conviction, a conviction resting on direct spiritual apprehension, that the ever present spiritual Christ is wholly Divine; he then tries to explain his meaning by using the terminology of current philosophy. To him Christ is Divine and therefore the Logos, *not* the Logos and therefore Divine.

But if the Biblical writers had no gift for, and, with one exception, no interest in, providing a philosophy of religion—or a theology, as some prefer to call it—it is futile to try and arrive at one, after the manner of the old divines, by piecing together odd texts and scattered hints into a more or less coherent system. What the theologian ought to do is to use the broad facts given by their spiritual apprehension as the data for his own philosophising.

(3) The Old Testament is the sum total of the surviving literature of a people with a unique genius for religion. Most of it is great literature, but considered as specifically religious literature, its value varies enormously in different parts. The historical books, for instance, as literature are incomparable, and without them the Prophets and Psalms would be largely unintelligible; but as religious authorities, as inspired and inspiring witnesses of the message of God to the soul of man, they stand lower than some of the books styled Apocrypha, or the great monuments of later Christian devotion. Indeed, except in isolated passages, they cannot plausibly be

ranked above the great classics of non-Christian religious literature, like the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius. Few things, I believe, have caused more real confusion of religious issues, or have done more in practice to make men blind to the real spiritual supremacy of the Bible taken as a whole, than the convention which draws a hard and fast line about a particular selection of Hebrew and Jewish literature—some thirty-eight books of the Old Testament and some twenty-seven books of the New—and says that these stand on one side of the line, and all the rest of the world's literature, sacred or profane, on the other; which ranks Esther and Leviticus with Isaiah and St. John, while a book like the "Imitation of Christ" is assigned to the outer darkness.

As I hinted above, I believe that the same principles, both positive and negative, which determine the exact nature of the authority of the Bible, are also applicable to that of the Church. If so, it may be fairly assumed that no doctrine, which has been strongly cherished for a long period in any considerable portion of the Church, is either unimportant or wholly

untrue. It is equally clear that if the doctrine was defined in a long past age, the terms, in which it is defined, will be those which were most illuminating and least inadequate (all definition of things divine is necessarily to *some* extent inadequate) for the men of that time. They may, then, become not only inadequate, but positively misleading, to men of a later time, and may even be made the logical justification of corrupt and mischievous practices; so much so as often to make the positive denial of the thing they stand for seem to many minds more true. The Roman doctrines of Purgatory and Transubstantiation are cases in point. As actually taught they are more than misleading, but the blank denial of the things for which they stand has surely been a real loss to Protestantism, though the loss has been more than compensated by an enhanced appreciation of what, personally, I should hold to be more vital truths.

The principle, however, is of greatest importance in its application to the Creeds. The Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds represent the considered judgment of the undivided Church

as to the essential elements of Christianity. Our principle then compels us to conclude, on the one hand, that no statement in these Creeds can be either unimportant or untrue, but on the other hand, that any statement may require re-interpretation in order to convey to us the same essential meaning which it was originally intended to convey. For any attempt to express truth is necessarily relative to the whole background of the thought of the age in which the attempt is made.

Apply this to the clause "born of the Virgin Mary." This item of the Gospel tradition was obviously included in the Creed as a concrete and matter-of-fact statement, which would guard and express that same fundamental belief, which was expressed by St. John in the language of contemporary metaphysic in the words "the Logos became flesh." Now from the point of view of historical evidence, the records of the Birth and Infancy of our Lord stand admittedly on a different footing from the records of His public ministry. The question of their exact historical value is still receiving careful in-

vestigation at the hands of many scholars, and a general agreement amongst those competent to pronounce upon such a subject has not yet been reached. But in the event of a consensus of Christian scholars concluding that their historical value is slight, I do not think that Christians need feel any sense of loss—provided that in the interval theologians have been able to arrive at an equally clear and straightforward expression, in terms of contemporary thought, of the essential fact that in Jesus Christ human and divine meet, each in a unique and perfect manifestation.

In that event it would soon come to be a matter of accepted usage to interpret the phrase, "born of the Virgin Mary," in a symbolic sense; just as it now is to interpret several other clauses of the Creed in that way. We do not cease to attach a definite meaning to the phrases "ascended into Heaven," or "descended into Hell," because we have ceased to regard the earth as the fixed centre of the Universe, with Heaven situated locally above and Hades locally underneath; nor do we consider unnecessary the denial of a Pan-

theistic conception of God expressed in the words "Creator of Heaven and Earth," because we do not accept as historical the details of the story in Genesis, to which undoubtedly the clause in the Creed originally referred. And there is no doubt at all that even at the time when the Apostles' Creed was taking shape there were many Christians who never thought of understanding the clause, "and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father" in a strictly literal sense.

We are now able to revert to the problem of authority in religion. In the New Testament the coming of Christ is regarded as an event for which there had been a long preparation. It is viewed as being, in one sense, a final revelation and a complete redemption; in another sense, as a revelation which is not yet completely understood, "for the Spirit shall lead you into all truth"; and as a redemption which is not yet completely effected, "for it doth not yet appear what we shall be." It is also taken for granted that this whole process of revelation, past, present and future, is the joint possession of a special community, indiscriminately described as Israel,

the People of God, or the Church (for the name Church is used of the Old Israel as well as of the New); but a possession which is theirs only on condition that they hand it on to all mankind, so far as mankind is willing to receive it. As for the individual member of the community, the revelation and the redemption are things which he does not create for himself, but accepts. Yet even so, that which is offered him is of use to him only in so far as he opens his eyes to see, sets his mind to understand, and directs his will to obey—only, in fact, in so far as he endeavours to work out his own salvation.

Now, it is quite clear that we have here a conception of a Redemption effected once for all, and of a faith once delivered to the saints, which is not only consistent with the modern belief that evolution is a necessary accompaniment of life; but which, paradoxical as it may appear, actually demands something of the sort to make it completely intelligible.

We have, also, a conception of authority, which is not only consistent with, but necessarily implies, the fullest possible development of individuality and freedom;

for it is the authority, not of the dead letter, but of the Spirit in the living community.

Thus, ideally, an authority exists, and one of just the kind that is wanted, but, in practice, it carries little weight, and its guidance is largely ineffectual. For the divisions in the Church mean that the authority of one part contradicts that of another; a fact which, psychologically at least, weakens authority, almost as much in regard to the points on which all are agreed, as in regard to those on which they differ. Besides this, both the Bible, and the traditional doctrines of the Church, express the results achieved by spiritual apprehension in terms which have lost much of their meaning with the disappearance of the general background of thought to which they were relative. Re-statement and re-interpretation are therefore required. But it is not the language or the intellectual forms, but the spiritual facts and values—of which that language and those forms were always a confessedly inadequate expression—that require to be interpreted. And these facts and values are only apprehended fully in a community which possesses a rich and

varied religious life. Thus, a religious revival, and co-operation between men of different religious traditions, will both be requisite, if the theologian is to be given in a living form the facts he is to re-interpret.

At present, with regard to many a tenet of no small importance, if we are candid with ourselves and others—as religious people, unfortunately, so seldom are—we can only say that we truly believe that there is "something in it," or that it is "more or less" true. That is not a satisfactory state of things. There is, indeed, very little that *is* satisfactory about the present state of Christianity, though there is much that is very hopeful for the future. There is too little Gospel ring about a message "with something in it." We, who have been brought up in the Church, may have got, we *have got*, enough to live upon, and something to give to others too; but if we are to go forth with a world-conquering message to those without, we must clear up our ideas, we must give definition to these various "somethings in it."

But we shall not get this clearing up of our conceptions by looking fondly back

towards the definitions of the past; an obsolete and misleading definition is far worse than none at all. We must bestir ourselves in the present, and look forward to the future. The Church must stir up all her gifts. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you, seek and ye shall find." The men who believe in reason must learn to practise prayer; the men who believe in prayer must learn not to be afraid of truth; the men who care little for either must learn to believe in both. The divided branches of the Church must draw closer together, first for co-operation in good works and then for discussion of belief. And discussion must go along with prayer; for in argument, and above all in religious controversy, the natural man is out for victory, only the spiritual man for truth. Thus each will learn to know the truth that the other can teach, and the error himself must give up. Then, for the first time, Scientist, Theologian and Scholar will be able to rise above the unconscious bias which, in an age of religious parties, no man can entirely escape; they will

no longer "attack" or "defend" positions, but simply follow the truth. And, stage by stage, what to-day seems vague and confused, will stand out more and more clear, and with more and more definite outline. Where *we* see only a narrow track, often half lost in the sands, there will then be a broad highway through the desert, and the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. And as truth becomes clearer, faith will grow stronger; and the faith that absorbs the mind and the heart is the faith that makes all things new, the faith that issues in love. And Christian Union will settle itself as truth and love prevail, for it is not truth that keeps us apart, but error and pride and hate.

And in that day much that *we* know only as Tradition will be seen to be also Truth, for Truth and Tradition will be found to agree far more than most men think. But what matters is not merely what men believe, but the passion with which they believe it; and it will make all the difference when a united Church is preaching a Gospel of truth which she believes, not

because it is an old-world tradition which is just too venerable to be quite given up, but because she "has seen for herself and knows." And on that day the world will hear.

III

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND STAND FOR?

The question has been asked of late, and asked with no small emphasis: *Ecclesia Anglicana*—for what does she stand? And it is one to which every member of that Church should be prepared to give a considered answer. But the mere fact that the question is asked shows that it is one to which the answer is not, on the surface at any rate, obvious to every beholder. In other words, the question really means, not so much, what as a matter of fact is the Church of England commonly regarded as standing for, whether by the mass of men outside or by any one section of those within; but rather:—What does she stand for ideally?

What, in view of her past history, of her present opportunities, and of her traditional and characteristic spirit or ἦθος, is she capable of standing for? In fact, what *ought* the Church of England to stand for?

The question is one which we shall inevitably view from a distorted standpoint, and out of due proportion, unless we first remind ourselves that the Church of England is not the whole Church, but only a branch of it; and unless we realise that there are certain things, and these the most important things of all, for which every branch of the Church has always stood and does still stand.

There are three things for which the Church of England, the Church of Rome, the National Churches of Eastern Europe, and the innumerable Protestant Churches one and all stand. Briefly we may sum them up as being: (1) A summons: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." (2) A creed: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have

everlasting life." (3) A promise: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The points on which the Churches differ are concerned with the organisation and discipline designed to bring home to men the summons, and to train them to be responsive to it; with the exact definitions and more detailed implications of the creed; with varieties of emphasis or theory as to the nature and normal operations of those means of grace by which the promise is made effectual. And, as a matter of fact, there is nothing which does more to make men deaf to the summons, to make doubtful the truth of the creed, to make ineffectual the power of the promise, than these multifarious differences.

Yet these disastrous differences have one partial compensation. Each Church strives to be the complete embodiment of the Christian ideal, just as every individual must aim at being so in his own life. But, just as the Christian spirit expresses itself differently in different individuals, so it would appear that every Christian community expresses the

Christian spirit in its own characteristic way. Each Church has, as it were, a corporate individuality. Hence any scheme of reunion which would eliminate the special characteristics of different communities—except, of course, in so far as any characteristic is not truly Christian—would be as undesirable as one which made all the individual members of a community exactly alike.

The position of the Church of Christ at the present day may be set forth in a parable. It is as if a party of children had found in some corner of a garden, all scattered and stained, the fragments of a china bowl. And each of the children has carried off for himself a different fragment—one a large piece, one a small piece, one a piece which is deeply stained, one a piece comparatively clean. And one of them, a member of the Society of Friends, as it might be, has carried away quite a small piece, but fresh and bright, and showing a section of the pattern wonderfully beautiful and seemingly almost complete in itself; and he thinks to himself that this, no doubt, is only a little piece, but, though small, it is the best. And others, Anglicans

or Presbyterians, as it might be, have carried away larger pieces, showing a more complete and more variegated portion of the pattern. And, because the patterns on their respective pieces have a certain completeness and balance, they are quite sure that, though these are only fragments, they contain the key to the whole, and show, at any rate, the most typical and representative portions of the design. And others say the same about their respective pieces. But there is one in particular—he is the Roman Catholic—who has carried off the largest piece of all, and because it is so large, and the pattern which it shows is so rich and so variegated, he thinks it is the whole bowl. And if you point to the chips and the stains, he will tell you that some are only surface-deep and that others are not really stains at all, but will appear—if you view them from the right angle and not in too strong a light—to be really a part of the design.

But after a while they begin to compare their different pieces, and they think of another and a better way to use them. They must carefully and painfully cleanse off the stains,

anxiously watching lest in so doing they also scrape away some of the enamel beneath; they must collect every little fragment, however tiny, and sort them and piece them together, each to each, never forcing them together by breaking off bits when they don't seem to fit immediately. For a bit broken off from any one piece is a bit broken off from the bowl. And they find that this cannot be done all at once. But piece by piece, whenever any two fragments are found to fit, they cement them together, and others to these, as it becomes clearer how each fits in; and so gradually the whole bowl will be joined together again. And then the original pattern, with all its marvellous richness of beauty and detail, will stand out whole and distinct, and the bowl can be filled with water —with the Water of Life—and the nations will drink thereof.

But if this, or something like this, be the ideal of a re-united Church, which the Divine working in history is forcing upon the minds of all Christians of to-day, then surely it behoves the members of every particular branch of the Church to ask for themselves

the question: For what does that particular branch stand? and to ask it in special relation to this ideal and aim. Not only the Church of England, but every branch of the Church should ask itself the question: What is the special knowledge, the special grace, the special power with which it has been entrusted? For that is the gift, which it is specially bound to develop, in order to give it back to the Master on the day when His whole Body on earth is again made one. To one He has given five talents, to another two talents, to another one.

Which, then, let us consider, are the particular talents, or if it be so, even the one talent, which has been entrusted to the Church of England, and which it is her special duty so to use and so to increase that her Lord, when He come, may receive again His own with usury?

It may help us to clear our minds on the subject, if we consider first of all whether there are any talents, which have been obviously and conspicuously delivered over to the special keeping of *other* branches of the Church, and which require for their full development

gifts which the Church of England can only possess and exercise in a subordinate degree—and that not in spite of, but because of her own special gifts.

Take first the Church of Rome. It is obvious that if we are to look about for a gift, which has been given to the Church of Rome to an extent unapproached by any other Church, it is the gift of authority. Authority is a thing to which any man, any group, any sect may indeed *lay claim*; the unique gift of the Roman Church is that when she makes this claim, even those who reject it, even those who hate it, are yet compelled to listen, compelled to produce a reason why they should reject it; and this in spite of the fact that the claim has been, and still is being, stretched to cover things, which grievously offend alike the intellect and the conscience of mankind. Thus it has come about that Rome is the great conservative force in Western Christendom. The changing currents of thought, and the disintegrating waves of criticism, have sometimes tended to wash away some vital aspects of Christianity and cause them elsewhere to be forgotten for a

generation or so. But Rome is still there to inspire later generations in the other Churches, to revive—often in a new and better form—that which their fathers had jeopardied or almost lost. In the ship of Christ Rome supplies the ballast, and if, as is commonly the case, much that is down in the hold is old iron, in this case there are also bars of silver and gold.

Now the Church of England, like the Church of Rome, has a spirit which is largely conservative; and, especially since the Tractarian Movement of the last century, she has played a part in English-speaking countries similar to that which has been played by Rome in regard to the Western Church as a whole; she has been the ballast of the ship. She has prevented men fired with the enthusiasm of new faith and new knowledge from forgetting that the old was also good. But, considered in her relation to the Church of Christ as a whole, it surely cannot be her special and characteristic gift merely to do on a smaller scale what Rome can do on a larger—and in the future it is obvious that she will be less able to exercise this particular function

even than in the past. For the shortening of means of communication between distant parts of the earth ; the incredible developments already attained, and likely in the near future to be attained to an infinitely greater extent, in the young civilisations of the New World ; the rapid awakening of the masses in Russia and in the rest of Sclavonic Europe ; and the rebirth of India and China—have brought it about that the future problems of Christianity must be worked out in relation to the world-field rather than in relation to Western Europe, still less to England alone.

But the more one considers religion from the standpoint of the world-field, the more clearly does one realise what a comparatively parochial institution the Church of England is. Even in the English-speaking world she is only the fourth largest denomination among the Reformed Churches. And so small an institution, even if absolutely united within itself, and always proclaiming the same message on the same note—which is eminently *not* the case with the Church of England—is not an institution which will be listened to by men, if its claim to be heard is

in the main based on the claim of authority and tradition. On that ground the Church of Rome, with her historical associations, her unbroken traditions, her international character, her rigid and united discipline, and the glamour which surrounds the very name of Rome stands out unique. But even the Roman Church is to-day beginning to look parochial and her prestige comparatively local; for in Russia, in the Balkans, in India, and in China, she is not, as she has been for Western Europe, the mother both of civilisation and of religion. Rome is not there the magic name it is for us.

Authority, then, in the sense, that is, of the authority which commands men's allegiance less by the reasonableness and transparent truth of its message than by the sheer weight of the prestige which comes from historical associations, unbroken tradition and united voice—authority of this kind is a gift, which the Church of England can never aspire to exercise. The Church of Rome can exercise it, but, it would seem, she will be less able to do so in the future than to-day.

On the other hand, there is another gift which

the Church of England is also precluded from making specifically her own, the gift of ready adaptability, which is the gift especially required for a pioneer Church. On the Canadian prairie during the last twenty or thirty years villages have arisen, as it were in the night-time, and before men knew, they have become cities. Now, in the Church of England the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper holds a more central place in religious teaching and practice than is the case with the other branches of the Reformed Church, and she requires that only an ordained priest may celebrate this Sacrament. These things are things which cannot be altered; which no one, so far as I know, in the Church of England, desires to see altered; but in practice they put her at an immense disadvantage, as compared with other Protestant bodies, for dealing with circumstances of the kind just mentioned.

For, if in such a new-born village two or three are found willing to come together in Christ's name, at once and without waiting for the priest—and that is often a long wait; for neither the man, nor the money to support

him, is at once forthcoming—they form the nucleus of a Church, keen and active and often making up for its lack of those characteristic aspects of worship for which the presence of the priest stands, by an increased depth and intensity in other directions. Thus, again and again it has happened that when at last the Church of England has been able to plant herself securely in the new town, most of the new settlers, even in cases where the majority were originally her own members, have been found to have irrevocably transferred their allegiance to some other branch of the Church, whose system lends itself to greater adaptability. Better organisation, more forethought, more sacrifice, may in the future do something to increase the adaptability of the Church of England to new conditions; but here again I do not see that she can rival other branches of the Church in this respect, without surrendering other things, which, from the point of view of her fulfilling her special function, are more important.

The way is now clear to return to our original question: What, then, is the special

talent entrusted to the Church of England? What is the special aim which she should keep in view?

The answer which many have given to this question is Comprehensiveness. But this is only half satisfactory, for comprehensiveness in itself is not a grace; it does not save souls. Quality, not quantity, is the criterion by which a Church is to be judged, and the value of comprehensiveness lies mainly in the fact that it is a *condition* peculiarly favourable to the development of certain graces. Such are, the spirit of mutual understanding, width of sympathy, and that toleration which springs, not from indifference, but from a real insight into and respect for a point of view which one does not oneself share. Comprehensiveness is also a condition of the power to realise and present, not of course in every individual, but at any rate in a corporate witness, the proper balance between different aspects of religion; which less comprehensive bodies, and different sections within the Church of England herself, readily tend to over-emphasise in the one direction or the other. Thus there is a check upon exaggera-

tion which is very salutary; for the *nemesis* of exaggeration is that it always leads to a reaction, which blinds men to the real truth in the position for which it stands.

The *via media* of the Church of England is often spoken of as if it were merely an external and unstable compromise between two fundamentally irreconcilable positions. Rome and Geneva, say some, are both of them logically consistent systems; the Church of England is just a hotch-potch, made up of some ingredients from each of the other two. Now, it is true that if we look merely at the two extreme wings of the Church of England, we see on the one side a small party whose general position is only a little removed from that of Rome, and at the other extreme a party which is only another of the many sub-varieties of Puritanism; and if the Church of England were merely an external union, kept up between these extreme parties by the fact of State recognition, we might have to admit that it was indeed a meaningless and external compromise.

But to confine our attention to the extremists on the one side or the other, is to

overlook the fact that the vast majority of Anglicans do, as a matter of fact, strongly dissent from many of the characteristic elements both in the Roman and in the Puritan positions. Each of these they believe to be in some points definitely mistaken, besides being defective in over-emphasising, and thus seeing in a distorted and misleading proportion, contrary aspects of the truth. They recognise that it is quite a common thing for individuals and communities to appropriate certain aspects only of the truth, and yet to build up a vigorous religious life upon them. Nevertheless since truth is essentially undivided, they believe that it should be possible and, if possible, it is most certainly desirable, to keep together in a single synthesis as many as possible of these different aspects. And this they believe the Church of England, more than any other Church, has endeavoured to do, and has in the main succeeded in doing.

Thus the *via media* position is accepted *con amore* by the ordinary Anglican, not as a compromise forced upon him from without, but because he really believes that truth is many-sided; and that therefore a position,

which endeavours to be a synthesis between aspects of truth, elsewhere kept in isolation, is likely to be a more adequate representation of truth than anything he can find elsewhere. Moreover, he is in no way perturbed by the comparative vagueness and width of interpretation characteristic of the doctrinal formularies of his Church, or by the taunt that they do not form a strict and logically coherent system, for he is profoundly convinced that the things of God are so far beyond man's comprehension, that any attempt to express them in human language is likely to be misleading in exact proportion to the exactitude of its definition.

The notion that abstract logic is a sure guide to right solutions has long ago been discredited in matters of statesmanship and everyday life. It is time that it was discredited in Theology also. The "fallacy of logic" is that its conclusions are only valid, if the statements with which it deals are exhaustive and completely adequate expressions of the fact or principle they describe. But the more important a fact, or the wider the scope of a principle, the more impossible

it is adequately to express it in any form of words whatever.

If this is true of things human, how much more so of things Divine? Any statement about God or His revelation, however true, must necessarily leave something unexpressed. We cannot then take a series of such statements, and argue that, if A is B and B is C and C is D, certain conclusions necessarily follow. They may do so, but they may not; for we are arguing not from the facts themselves, but from an admittedly inadequate description of them. At every stage something is left out, and those little somethings, in their totality, may possibly be all-important to the right conclusion. It is as though a man were to pour a gallon of water into one bucket, and from that into another, and from that into a third, and so on, and so on; and then argued that the last bucket in the series *must* contain a full gallon, although he knew that every bucket had a leak.

Hence it follows that the man, or the Church, with a gift for logical system is the most likely of all to reach wrong conclusions. For the more elaborate and strictly logical the

system, the more probable it is that something has been left out. While the man, or the Church, that has no such gift, but painfully and humbly studies the facts of history and of life, may possibly light upon the essential something, which the systematic brilliance of the other has compelled him to ignore or deny.

This is why the often stated dilemma, "Rome or nothing," is fundamentally misleading. If our knowledge of God is worthless, unless our deductions about it can be packed into cut-and-dried formulæ, all fitting into one another to form a rigid logical system, it does indeed follow that we must make our choice between Agnosticism and Rome. But, if the things that pass all understanding transcend our little systems also, the suggestion that any two of these are alternatives, that exhaust the possibilities of existence, should almost provoke a smile.

It is, then, abundantly evident that the intermediate position of the Church of England is not an external compromise, but the natural expression of the spirit of the community. Christianity is above all a spirit,

and we can only assess the contribution which a particular Church can make to the Church Universal by analysing and discriminating the characteristic spirit of that Church. We must ask, then, what are the characteristic qualities of the spirit of the Church of England? Now, the main point which I wish to emphasise is that this synthetic or moderate spirit (which we have seen to be characteristic of the Church of England), though it may indeed express itself in doctrinal formulæ and in an ecclesiastical organisation, which, externally considered, appear to be intermediate between those produced by the Roman Catholic and by the Puritan spirit respectively, is itself not intermediate between these two, but something different in kind.

"Extremes meet," says the proverb; and in politics, scholarship, and everything else, the partisans, the fanatics, and the men of one idea may, whatever their party views, be classed in one group; while the men whose leading characteristics are restraint, proportion, judgment, and the desire to see and combine the truth in opposing points of view, stand in another. It is often almost an

accident in which of two hostile camps your extremist will be found; it is not a matter of accident whether a man is an extremist or a moderate. The truth of this is further brought home by the common observation that if an extremist changes his point of view he usually does so for the extreme opposite. A Nonconformist or an extreme Evangelical, who is led by some spiritual crisis to a change of allegiance, rarely becomes a moderate; he usually becomes an extreme High Churchman, or else a Roman Catholic.

It is, of course, emphatically the case that, in practice, men of the moderate and synthetic type of mind abound in the Roman and Puritan Churches; just as it is true that extremists are plentiful inside the Church of England. The strict authoritarian and the member of an Ascetic Order on the one hand, and the rigid teetotaler and the person who, for conscience sake, renounces amusements like theatre-going and dancing on the other, are fortunately both to be found in the Church of England. Their influence on the nation at large, and on the moderate section of the Church, is as valuable as is that of the moderate section

upon them. My point, however, is that they are not the most *characteristic* product of the Church of England; whereas they are the most characteristic and the most typical products of the Roman and Puritan spirits respectively, and of the doctrine and discipline of those communions.

Spiritually, the Roman Catholic and the Puritan, in spite of all their many and important differences from one another, stand on one side of a line, and the typical Anglican stands on the other. I am not arguing that the Anglican spirit is either more or less valuable than the other spirit. It is sufficiently obvious that in this world some things will never be attempted except by extremists or, at least, by one-sided men; and, on the other hand, that most things initiated or carried out by extremists bring disaster, unless the moderates can assert a restraining influence. I am not saying that the one type is better than the other, but merely that they are different, and that each has its special contribution to make towards the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

I would, however, protest that I am myself

quite unmoved by the sneers, which it is rather fashionable in some circles to make, at moderate positions and moderate men. τὸ μέσον was the ideal which governed Greek art, and, in theory at any rate, Greek life as a whole. The spirit of balance and moderation has produced the English constitution, which, with all its patent defects, has become the pattern for the government of the civilised world. After all, the "sweet reasonableness" of the considerate and synthetic temper ultimately implies that faith in man, which alone makes cities habitable, and, that unhurried faith in God, which sooner or later avails to uproot mountains also.

No doubt the moderate position has special temptations of its own. Moderation has a comfortable sound; it is the plea ready to hand for all who wish to do nothing in particular. The duty of considering both sides of a question is frequently the excuse given for the refusal to decide definitely which is the right side, and to act on that decision. But these are the defects, not of the ideal, but of those who falsely claim it as their own. Every army has its camp followers and every

profession of faith has those who disgrace its banner. If the indifferents affect the label "moderate," the ill-conditioned as often wear the zealot badge. *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.* The sins of omission, which are the weakness of the "moderate party," are no worse than the sins of commission that have been perpetrated in the name of zeal.

But the true Christian moderation, which springs from a real effort to understand the truth in rival views and the justice of opposing claims, and from a real insight into the value of conflicting ideals, is not an easy but a hard thing to attain; for it depends on the intellectual humility, which is ready to learn from *any* source, and the true charity, which respects the moral personality of *any* individual.

But to go a little deeper, let us ask why it is that there is this affinity between the Roman Catholic and the Puritan tempers, in contradistinction to the Anglican? It would seem that, historically, this is due to the fact that both Romanism and Puritanism reproduce in the main St. Augustine's interpretation of Christianity, whereas the outlook of the

Anglican Church is much more akin to the interpretation which we find in the great Greek Fathers.

The fundamental conviction of St. Augustine was the utter corruption of human nature, which made it impossible that it should even desire, much less co-operate in, its own salvation. In the Latin Church this idea works itself out in the belief that the individual cannot be trusted to stand alone, whether in thought or action; in thought, he must absolutely submit to the dogmatic decisions of the Church; in action, he is controlled by the compulsion of regular attendance at the confessional. To the same influence is probably due the disproportionate exaltation of the "religious" life of poverty, chastity, and obedience; since only here is complete renunciation possible of things which, though good, or at least indifferent, in themselves, are things which a free individual may possibly misuse.

Romanism holds up a double ideal, the ideal for the man living in the world, and the ideal of the typical religious Order. Puritanism discarded this double ideal. Poverty,

chastity, and obedience were replaced as an ideal by citizenship, marriage, independence—all of them in the Lord—which partly corresponded to the ideal which the Roman held up for life "in the world." But the Puritan, discarding the Roman conception of a separate ideal for the religious Order, endeavoured to make the Church as a whole a religious Order, and to cultivate the virtues of the life "in the world" in the same spirit as Catholicism had cultivated the virtues of the monk. Hence, though in theory, and to a large extent in fact, Puritanism stood for liberty, in practice it resulted in an increase of discipline and a multiplication of restrictions on individual action, which approximated much more nearly to what was demanded by the Roman of the "religious," than to the laxer standard allowed to the ordinary Christian; and the discipline was not less but more exacting, because it was enforced by the sanctions and traditions of family life and not by the confessional.

Again, St. Augustine's belief in the utter corruption and impotence of human nature led him to lay stress on the automatic opera-

tion of divine grace; for if man cannot even co-operate in his own salvation, that grace must be capable of working, at any rate in the initial stages, even without his consent. If a drowning man has got beyond the point when he can clutch at a rope thrown out to save him, the only chance is to haul him out with a boat-hook. The Roman view of Baptism is largely Augustinian. The Puritan, rejecting this doctrine of Baptismal regeneration, adopted a precisely similar conception of the working of the divine "call." For he held that only those who were predestinated, and that for no merit of their own, were to be saved, and that by these an irresistible call would at the predestined moment be heard.

The Church of England, on the other hand, has drawn her theology far more from the Greek Fathers than from St. Augustine. The extreme predestinarian doctrine and the *ex opere operato* doctrine of the sacraments were alike repudiated. Man is regarded as fallen and needing redemption, but not as "made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." Grace is required, but it is also required of a man (here the Roman and most

Calvinists would agree) to co-operate with the grace that is given him, to " work out his own salvation in fear and trembling." Freedom of the will has been assumed, hence the burden of preaching has tended to be on the moral, rather than on the doctrinal side of religion. Human nature has been regarded, not as wholly bad, but as made in the image of God and as still retaining something of the impress of the die.

Above all, liberty, both in thought and action, has been the characteristic of Anglicanism. Liberty, it is recognised, may easily degenerate into licence, yet in itself it is good; it is a good, however, which cannot exist at all unless it is put in practice. Liberty involves risks, but it is worth while running the risks for the sake of the results to be achieved. Moreover, " the earth is the Lord's and the fulness of it," hence that suspicion of harmless pleasures, characteristic of Puritanism, (and also of Romanism, in so far as the technically " religious " life is concerned), has been conspicuously absent in the general attitude of the main body of the Church of England, though not, of course,

in that of certain sections. Art, scholarship, music, sport, innocent recreation have been regarded not as possible temptations, nor yet as concessions to the weakness of human nature, but as natural and legitimate expressions of that full and complete life, which is also regarded as the highest life. Thus the Christian ideal, as interpreted by the Church of England, includes also the best elements in the Greek ideal of life. It is a synthesis, to use Matthew Arnold's terms, of Hebraism and Hellenism.

If all this be thought a little abstract, I would mention the names of certain famous men, who differ from one another in very many and very important things, but who are all united in two things, viz., they were passionately attached to the Church of England and her ideals, and they were men, who, if they had been similarly attached to any other religious body, would have been conspicuously other than they were. That is, they are men who may be fairly taken as characteristic and typical of the ἦθος of the English Church. I would name first of all Hooker, the creator of Anglican theology, and

to no small extent of English prose, and a saint in private life. Then, passing on to a group of contemporaries in the early part of the last century, I would name John Keble, Thomas Arnold, Charles Kingsley.

The range of Christian character and achievement represented by these names is wide and fruitful; it is not universal. Certain types of character and achievement may be named as distinctly *not* characteristic of the essential spirit of Anglicanism. To quote as instances of this the great mediæval saints, like St. Francis or St. Thomas à Kempis, would be unfair and beside the point. They were produced in a Church whose inheritance has been, as it were, divided among *all* the Churches of the Reformation and the modern Latin Church of the counter-Reformation as well, and it is only with the specific spirit of the various post-Reformation Churches that an inquiry into the contribution of each to future reunion is concerned. But I would name as eminent types of Christian character alien to the genius of the Church of England, Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis de Sales, Calvin, and George Fox.

The Anglican spirit has not produced conspicuous examples of the whole range of Christian character; it has produced a wide range, and many of these of a type which could hardly have been produced elsewhere. It is a spirit, therefore, which is worthy of surviving, and one which it should be our aim to strengthen and develop along its own lines. That does not mean that we are to rest satisfied with either the range of variety, or the depth and intensity, of Christian character and devotion which it has produced in the past. It does mean that it would be disastrous to narrow or pervert the tradition in one direction or the other in order to produce a few more individuals of the types which are specially characteristic either of Puritanism or of Romanism.

If we may sum up the dominant quality of the highest Anglican type in two words, I think that sanity and charity would suffice; not, of course, that I mean to suggest that these two qualities are possessed to a conspicuous degree by even the majority of present-day members of the Church of England; much less do I mean to imply that

they are not to be found in the members of other Churches. What I do mean is, that they are the special characteristic of the greatest and the best, and therefore the most typical, of the men whom the Church of England has produced; and they are, therefore, the qualities a deficiency in which, where it occurs, is more reprehensible in the individual, than it is in the case of members of communities, whose saints manifest other virtues in a more dominant proportion.

Anglicanism, then, whatever may be said of its historical origins—and much which is commonly said is ignorant and unfair—stands to-day, not for a political compromise, but for a type of Christian spirit. It has something specific and definite to contribute to the Church Universal; nay, more, it has already begun to make that contribution. Only a very superficial observer can have failed to have noticed during the last half century a modification of the practices and ideals, which I have outlined as specifically characteristic of Puritanism, in the direction of what I would venture to regard as the wider and humaner ideals of Anglicanism. Recent movements in

the Church of Rome seem to point in the same direction. The seeds of a liberal movement in Romanism were sown by Newman, and came from his Anglican upbringing; and certain features in the recent Modernist Movement—which, though crushed and impotent at the moment, will doubtless in a more chastened form reappear before long—are an effort to introduce into the Roman communion something of the characteristically Anglican ideal of a Christianity consistent with intellectual liberty and a wide and progressive culture.

And this brings me to my final point. The late Bishop Creighton laid it down as the *differentia* of the Church of England that it was "the Church which appealed to sound learning." He did not mean, of course, as he was at pains to explain, that other Churches were indifferent to learning; but that at the time of the Reformation—the formative period in the re-creation of the present religious situation of Europe—the storm and stress and struggle were less acute in England than elsewhere. It was, therefore, at that time more possible in England than elsewhere for

considerations of this kind to have due weight; and it was less inevitable that they should be overborne, through the bitterness of fanatical partisanship, or the exigencies of political necessity. But if this is so, it surely points out another direction in which the Church of England should be competent to make, or should at least attempt to make, another contribution to the work of the Church Universal;—a contribution, namely, to the problem, never more urgently pressing than to-day, of theological restatement.

For comprehensiveness in a Church has one other great advantage: it means that within that Church men of very different opinions must, somehow or other, live and work together; and it means that liberty of discussion and expression must be allowed, as indeed has always been the tradition of the Church of England, to the widest extent compatible with the maintenance of unity at all. But the bringing into close and friendly contact of men of differing opinions, freedom to submit hypotheses, and freedom to discuss them, are a *sine quâ non* of all progress in the re-statement of religious truths, or in the re-

expression of doctrines in changing terms, to meet the changing thought of successive generations.

The Church of England is not, indeed, the only Church in which conditions favourable to such activities exist; but it is obvious that a Church, in which comprehensiveness is the conspicuous feature, and which inherits a special tradition of culture and sound learning, will be conspicuously going out of her way to wrap one at least of her talents in a napkin and bury it in the ground, unless many of her sons devote their thought and their energies to this task; and unless those, who are themselves precluded from participating in this part of her work, are prepared to support those, who are engaged in it, with their sympathy and their prayers.

What then does the Church of England stand for? The answer is becoming clearer. History, overruled as we believe by Divine Providence, has determined for her beyond any other Church the character of comprehensiveness—a character which is equally the cause of her weakness and of her strength. Comprehensiveness is the condition most

favourable to the production of, it therefore constitutes a special call to display, pre-eminence in three things: charity, sanity, and the love of truth. Other things this same comprehensiveness, or, rather, the spirit which can tolerate comprehensiveness, almost precludes. Not ours, or rarely ours, to produce that peculiar type of saintship and humility, which comes from absolute submission of thought and word and deed to a visible authority believed to be infallible and universal. Not ours, or rarely ours, to produce that divine insanity, which often goes with narrow and one-sided views. Not ours the ready practical adaptability of institutions to changing needs.

We have not been given all the talents, but we have been given these—charity, sanity, and the eye ever open to truth; and they were given us, not for complacent enjoyment, but with the stern injunction: "Occupy till I come." These are the things which the Church of England *ought* to stand for, these are the things which she *can* stand for, and on the day when she ceases to *try* to stand for these, she had better cease to be.

IV

THE CONCEPTION OF THE ONE CHURCH

PART I.—*From Unity to Disruption*

AT the time of the birth of Christ the whole of the civilised world, or at least the world of Western civilisation, was comprised in a single State, the Roman Empire, which had incorporated into itself all the numerous smaller States of the Mediterranean basin, through whose creative energy and mutual interactions that civilisation had been developed. Within and subject to this World-state, but owning a grudging allegiance to it, and forming a distinct portion of the population in all the larger and most of the smaller towns of the empire, there lived a people who claimed to form a State of a different kind, a

theocratic State, viz.:—the Jewish people of the Dispersion, regarding themselves as specifically " the people of God."

Historically the Jews were only one of the many minor nationalities within the Roman Empire; but at this period, except for the comparatively small proportion of them who still lived on their native soil of Palestine, they had almost lost those special characteristics which in ordinary usage are held to constitute nationality. Ordinarily speaking, a nation is a community of men and women united to one another, and at the same time separated from the rest of mankind, by the possession of a certain common heritage, which includes at least two or three, if not all, of four things—the land they dwell in, the language they speak, the laws and customs by which they are bound and the blood that runs in their veins. But the Jew of the Dispersion lived in the same country, spoke the same language, and (except in so far as the habits of personal and family life were concerned) was, with trifling exceptions, bound by the same law as the Gentile. The Jewish community, moreover,

carried on an active religious propaganda; proselytes were freely admitted; and a proselyte not merely accepted the religious beliefs of the Jew, he became a Jew. Thus even the tie of common blood, the last of the characteristics of nationality, which has been mentioned, had *potentially* ceased to be the note of this community.

The points of difference between a member of this so-called "nation" and the men among whom he dwelt, were solely those which arose from the beliefs and usages of the religion which he professed. That is to say, the Jews of the Dispersion, as the result of a subtle historical evolution, were ceasing to be what is ordinarily meant by a nation. They were a community, whose bond of connection was not that of country, language, law or blood, but simply that of religion; that is to say, they had become, or rather were on the way to becoming, what nowadays we call a "church." The transition, of course, was far from being complete, for they still looked to Palestine as their native land, and the vast majority were still of purely Jewish blood. But even the name *ecclesia*—"church," or "congre-

gation," as it is rendered in the English version of the Old Testament—was already the technical term by which they styled their community, when considering it especially in its religious aspect.

Another notable fact about this community was that it was regarded as extending beyond the confines of the present life. The belief had become for a long while established, at least among a large section, that the great and righteous men of the past,—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Prophets, and all the innumerable men and women who had served God in their generation but had left no memorial,—were waiting and watching in another world for the fulfilment of the glorious promise of the Messianic Kingdom, when the dead and the living should together enter into a complete fruition of eternal bliss.

The primitive Christian Church regarded itself not as an entirely new society, but simply as that portion of the Jewish Church which had not, by its blind rejection of the Messiah and His message, forfeited for itself the promises made to Israel by the ancient Prophets. After all, it had always been

foretold that only a remnant would be found worthy in the Day of the Lord. It was not that the Christian Church was an offshoot from Judaism, as the modern historian is apt to put it; it was that the majority of the Jews had broken off from the true remnant. The Christian Church was the true Israel, the true heir of Patriarchs and Prophets, and of "the promises" of the Old Testament. The Christ who was with "the Church in the wilderness"[1] was the same Christ who was with the Church in the Roman Empire. The Gentiles had come in, indeed, in unexpected numbers, but that was not entirely strange; many of the Prophets had foretold it; they were but the wild olive grafted on to the old stock, and thereby become organically one with it.[2] And, just as to the Jew, the Church on earth had been but the outpost of the Church of the Fathers, so to the Christian, the "Church militant here in earth" was but a small and imperfect portion of the Body of Christ.

The local Christian Churches in the various towns of the Empire arose in many ways. Some were founded by men like St. Paul,

[1] *Cf.* Acts vii. 38; 1 Cor. x. 4. [2] *Cf.* Rom. xi. 24.

who gave their lives to missionary propaganda and worked on a more or less thought-out plan. But the majority seem to have been founded in a much more haphazard way: by a Jewish pilgrim, who had heard the Word, perhaps in Jerusalem, and returned to spread the new teaching in his own city; by a Christian trader, whose business called him to move from town to town; by a wandering "prophet." It might have been expected that the result of this would have been a vast number of independent local congregations, having little regard for the idea of corporate unity. But the fact that from the beginning each congregation regarded itself simply and solely as the local branch of the one united people of God, made the idea of the Church as a whole *always* prior to that of the local congregation. And this view was still further reinforced by the conception of the Church as the Body of Christ—a concept whose significance was felt to be mystical indeed, but the reverse of metaphorical.

The question, how far this ideal unity had found concrete expression in the way of external organisation is one of no small

obscurity. There was one Lord, one faith, one baptism, but it would seem as if at first there was little or no organised and inter-connected system of government for the Church as a whole. Wandering prophets and apostles (the term apostle, it will be remembered, was applied to many besides the Twelve) represented no doubt in a way a ministry of the Church universal, but it can hardly be regarded as an organised ministry; and the exact relation of this ministry to the ministry of the local Churches, and the exact form and origin of the local ministry, are both largely a matter of conjecture, except in the case of the Church of Jerusalem and the Churches founded by St. Paul.

In his own Churches St. Paul appears to have himself established an organised *local* ministry almost, but—and this may possibly indicate that it was a new departure—not quite, from the first (*cf.* Acts xiv. 23); but, apparently, this was not originally constituted on a "monepiscopal" system. By the beginning of the second century, if not before, a *local* Episcopate, with Presbyters and Deacons as clearly defined subordinate

orders, existed in Antioch and in the chief cities of Asia Minor, and probably elsewhere; and by the end of the second century episcopacy seems to have become universal. But at what date the practice first arose of consecrating a *local* Bishop by Bishops summoned from neighbouring Churches—by which simple device the local Episcopate became the basis of an organised ministry of the Church Universal—is unknown. The Canon of the Council of Nicaea, requiring at least three consecrating Bishops, was no doubt intended to standardise a custom of long standing.

During the first four centuries the Roman Empire was elaborating its organisation on a bureaucratic system, forced thereto largely by the incompetence of the local bodies, which in the Augustan age enjoyed no small independence. It was almost inevitable that the organisation of the Church should tend to follow the same bureaucratic model. Dioceses and provinces became geographically identical with similar divisions in the Imperial administration: the ecclesiastical organisation followed closely the lines of the civil government, and, as time went on, became not only more rigid but

more authoritarian. This change was forced upon the Church by the severe persecutions which she had to face, and by the conflict with fantastic heresies like Gnosticism, and with no less fantastic tendencies in morals, whether in the direction of antinomianism or in that of ascetic extravagance. A community, which has to fight for its very existence, must necessarily adopt an almost military organisation : power and initiative must necessarily cease to lie with the individual or with the majority, and be concentrated in the hands of a few.

The strength of her organisation, combined with the heroism of her martyrs, had enabled the Church to defy the persecutions of the strongest and ablest of the emperors. This was at least one of the main reasons, which made Constantine seek to strengthen the decaying Empire by forming an alliance with an organisation, which his predecessors had been unable to crush. By the end of the fourth century, as the result of this policy, the Church became practically coterminous with the State. In many ways this fact has been of cardinal importance in the history both of Christianity and of civilisation. But what it

concerns us in the present place to notice is that it was necessarily fatal to the unity of the Church ; for the practical, though not as yet theoretical, identification of the World-church and the World-state necessarily entailed the consequence, that in practice, though not of course in theory, the maintenance of the unity of the World-church depended on the continued maintenance of the unity of the World-state.

Now the unity of a State which is composed of heterogeneous elements may be maintained for a while, often for a long while, by a strong central authority, especially if such union is keenly realised as valuable against enemies without. The Austrian Empire is a conspicuous instance. But the only unity, which can be relied upon to survive a repeated series of heavy blows at the prestige and effectiveness of the central government, is the natural unity of a State, which is homogeneous in race, language, and culture. This the Roman Empire was not. In Egypt and in the Syrian and Armenian provinces the Hellenistic culture of the eastern half of the Empire had been unable to penetrate deeply

beyond the larger towns and the more cultivated classes. There was also the far more important racial and linguistic division between the two great halves of the Empire, between the half-orientalised Hellenism of the East and the Italianised barbarism of the West.

Hence the beginning of the break-up of the World-state of the Roman Empire in the fifth century was also the beginning of the break-up of the World-church. First to go were the vernacular Churches of Syria, Armenia, and Egypt. Nominally, and up to a point of course really, the questions at issue between these national Churches and the Catholic Church were doctrinal. The religious and doctrinal differences in question had originated within, and for a long time disturbed, the main body of the Catholic Church. The significant fact is that after much heart-searching and prolonged controversy a solution was ultimately reached, to which the parties in the Latin and Greek-speaking area found they could assent, whereas the vernacular Churches preferred secession. It is clear, therefore, that doctrinal differences

would not have proved insuperable, had the different parties *wished* to understand what each really meant by the words they used.

Besides the doctrinal, there was a political point at issue, viz., that the Catholic Church was regarded as an engine for Romanising, or rather Hellenising, these nationalities and so strengthening the Empire; and this denationalisation the local Churches did not want. In the early centuries Christianity had been, in a sense, a democratic movement persecuted by the government; Syrian, Egyptian, Armenian, Greek and Latin were united by a common bond. Now that the Church had formed a close alliance with the State, the Christians of the nationalities, which could least make their influence felt on the government, naturally became suspicious. But the Church being the Body of Christ, and therefore in theory having nothing to do with Caesar, no portion of the Church can with a good conscience detach itself from any other, unless it discovers that that other is heretical. Where, however, hatred and jealousy abound, genuine misunderstanding of theological expressions is easy, and where the hated person

has, and exercises, the power to persecute, it has often been found comforting to believe that he will go to hell. This, in the last resort, is the explanation of the national schisms of the fifth and sixth centuries.

The equally inevitable split between the Latin and the Greek-speaking portions of the Empire was retarded for a while by Justinian's reconquest of Italy, and by the long rivalry between Rome and the Arianism of theGothic and Lombard conquerors of the West. Hence it was at first a necessity, and afterwards at least a source of strength, for the Popes to recognise the Emperor at Byzantium. But later on the havoc wrought by the Germanic invaders, and their subsequent absorption into the Latinised population of the West, enormously increased the racial and cultural divisions, which had always existed, between the eastern and western halves of the Empire; for the difference was now the difference between an old and proud, but declining civilisation, and a haughty, vigorous and progressive barbarism.

In the year 800 the Pope seized the

opportunity, presented by the fact that the throne of Constantinople was held by a woman, and that the Church of the East was imbued with what Rome regarded as the iconoclastic heresy, to place on the head of the Frankish monarch Charlemagne, the hereditary champion of Catholicism against the Arian, and of Western Christendom against the Moslem, the Roman Imperial crown. In theory there was only one Roman Empire; theoretically, therefore, Charles the Great—assuming the papal act to have any legal validity at all—became Emperor of the whole realm, which had been ruled over by Augustus or Constantine. In practice his rule extended only over Germany, Gaul, North and Central Italy, and part of Spain—a territory which comprised no inconsiderable portion of the western half of the Empire, and, in some directions, extended even beyond its borders. Under his successors the nominal range of his Empire was contracted, and within those nominal borders its actual power decreased; but the main importance of the incident is, that it finally established in the minds of men for another seven centuries the

notion of the intrinsic identity of the World-state and the World-church. The Emperor of Constantinople was a long way off, out of sight of most men in Western Europe; and, in strict theory, he was held to be a usurper; while the Church of the East, except during short intervals of reconciliation with the West, was regarded as heretical.

Thus the Middle Ages start with the conception of the identity of the World-church and the World-state—the one represented by the Papacy, the other by the Emperors—who were regarded as two co-ordinated powers in one single community. The theory of the World-state gradually broke down, even as a theory; but the World-church was a fact, and her officers assumed to themselves many of the duties and prerogatives, which would properly have belonged to the secular authority. The Pope was himself a temporal sovereign. Prince-Bishops in many a country owed him an allegiance, that it was often hard to reconcile with the allegiance in temporal things, which they owed to their temporal sovereigns. Clerical persons, not merely priests and monks but all who

could lay claim to Minor Orders—which were often administered for this reason—and in some countries even all who could read, could claim "benefit of clergy," whereby, in temporal as well as in spiritual things, they came under the jurisdiction of Rome. Education throughout Europe was under the control of the Church, and therefore under the control of Rome. On occasion the Popes even claimed to declare vacant the thrones of monarchs, or to demand the obeisance of the Emperor himself.

Thus the Church was not only the World-church, but became, up to a certain point and for many important purposes, the World-state as well. The Papacy has been described as "the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave of it." The epigram is misleading; it was no ghost.

Some time before the Reformation the quasi-imperial powers of the Papacy, except in the matter of judicature, had been on the wane. But exactly in proportion as the World-church had approximated to being also the World-state, she had become exposed to the danger of disruption from the revolt of those

sections, which by race and culture were least in sympathy with the central authority. And, when practical abuses and the spread of the new learning had shaken the moral and intellectual prestige of the ancient system, the crash came.

The Reformation, unlike the earlier schisms which we have mentioned, was the expression of a great moral and religious revival ; but no less than these was it also the revolt of nationality, endeavouring to express its religious as well as its political freedom and individuality, against the still surviving claims of the World-state and the World-culture, represented at the moment by the Roman Church. It was the rebellion of the Teuton against the Latin ; a generalisation none the less true, because the more Latinised Teutons ultimately sided with the Latin. Luther finished the work which Alaric began.

The Reformation, in spite of very various expressions, was essentially a single spiritual impulse, and an immense religious advance ; and its quickening influence was felt also within the Roman allegiance, in the so-called counter-Reformation. But, externally viewed,

the immediate result of the Teutonic revolt from the Roman Church was very similar, in the ecclesiastical sphere, to the immediate result, in the political sphere, of the Teutonic invasion of the Roman Empire. A magnificent, imposing and orderly system, expressing the thought, the labours and the culture of generations, was succeeded by a chaos of small, hastily contrived, heterogeneously organised sects and theologies warring one against another—reminding one of the chaos of barbaric kingdoms, princedoms, free cities and the like, which had taken the place of the Roman Empire.

Historical analogies are proverbially misleading, but the analogy between the Roman Church and the Roman Empire is in many points so striking, as inevitably to suggest some further reflections. Half of the Roman Empire, with its capital at Constantinople, survived the barbarian invasions. It was even, in a way, invigorated by the concentration of its forces which ensued, and lasted another thousand years, hard hit at times and seemingly tottering, but arising again and again and reconquering most or all of what it had lost;

unprogressive, yet retaining almost intact much of the priceless culture that had disappeared elsewhere, preserving it until such time as the barbarian invaders of the West were ready to receive and carry on the torch; at last gradually sinking from decrepitude within and attacks without. Meanwhile, within the chaos and barbarism of the West, there was seen to be a spirit of life and progress, which was lacking to the surviving East; and gradually there evolved from it a young and vigorous civilisation which, at the right time, was able to receive from Constantinople all that was most valuable of that which she had so long preserved. From the spirit, not the letter, of what was then received, assimilated by their own native vigour, the nations of Modern Europe have produced a variegated civilisation fuller and richer than anything that Rome in her grandest days had known.

Are there not signs that since the Reformation the history of the Roman Church has been, and is likely to be, that of the Byzantine Empire? Preserver and defender of much that has been lost elsewhere, often losing ground, at times appearing to totter,

yet ever and again reconquering with heroic energy much of the territory which she has lost, may it not be that she is in reality slowly and steadily decadent and shrinking? On the other hand, the barbarous but vigorous vitality of Protestantism seems to be gradually evolving, not one single type, but several characteristically different yet essentially related types, of Christianity, freer, richer, and more enterprising than the old; with greater power of leavening and raising the general standard of social life; and able to reconcile liberty and discipline, revelation and the unfettered pursuit of truth. So far, no doubt, this is rather a promise than an achievement; and possibly something more must be learnt from Rome before it is achieved. But that something will not be learnt by slavish imitations of her organisation or of her formulæ, but by catching and reproducing in freer and wider force the richness and universality of her spirit and her life.

Rome at present seems to be following the track of Constantinople—will she end in the same way? It depends on one thing: Rome has within her two spirits; the spirit of her

Master, who when offered all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, rejected them as the temptation of the Evil One; and the spirit of the Imperial city where she dwells, *parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.* Which of the two spirits that live within her will ultimately prevail—the spirit of brotherhood, which is the spirit of Christ; or the spirit of empire, which is the spirit of Rome? On the answer to this question must surely depend, not only the possibility of Reunion between Rome and other Churches, but her own ultimate survival.

To resume our historical survey. We have seen how largely the identification (so far as it still survived in practice) of the World-state and the World-church assisted the break up of what claimed to be the World-church in the sixteenth century, just as it had done in the fifth and the sixth and the eleventh. But the idea that Church and State should ideally be co-extensive was not yet worn out, and the experiment of National Churches was tried in England and Scotland, in Scandinavia, and a great part of Germany, and all but tried in France. The principle of

the continental Reformation settlement, *cujus regio ejus religio*, was not the cynical compromise that it sounds to modern ears: granted the necessity of tolerating at all the existence of more than one type of religion, it corresponded to what, at the time, was felt to be a natural and proper state of things. But the theory of the co-extensiveness of the small Church with the small State, was as defective as the theory of the World-church co-extensive with the World-state, which it superseded. Its breakdown may be traced to four main causes.

(1) Political changes soon led to the absorption of the whole or parts of smaller States into larger ones; but it was impossible to alter the religious tenets of the majority of the inhabitants of a district, when it was incorporated into another State. Thus, sooner or later it came about that many States necessarily included, and officially recognised, more than one type of religion. In Germany this was common, especially after the Napoleonic Wars; in Great Britain it followed the union of the English and Scotch thrones. Thus the theory, one State, one religion, completely

broke down, though—strangely enough as it appears to us—States, which were compelled to recognise more than one type of religion, usually continued to persecute, or at any rate to penalise, any types beyond the minimum number that they were compelled to recognise. Great Britain, for instance, which acknowledged both Anglicanism and Presbyterianism as State religions, discouraged both Roman Catholicism and Nonconformity. But the mere fact that most Protestant, and some Catholic, governments consented to tolerate unrecognised sects, even where they frowned on them, has tended still further to discredit the principle *cujus regio ejus religio.*

(2) The whole spirit of the Reformation movement was to emphasise the individual aspect of religion. This aspect is so much taken for granted by ourselves that it is worth while to pause and notice that it is really exceptional. At the present day in Eastern Europe a man calls himself a member of the Orthodox, the Bulgarian or the Armenian Church, even if in actual belief he is practically an agnostic ; for his Church is a thing which is his by birth and baptism, rather than by individual con-

viction. Hence the "forcible conversions" which have played so large a part in Balkan politics. So, recently, the "conversion" of Ruthenians to the Russian Church has been made a matter of trial for high treason in Austrian Poland, and apparently on good grounds. Individual conviction may be strong enough to make a man leave his Church for another in very exceptional cases; but it is not the reason why he belongs to it, or why, in nine cases out of ten, he is content to remain in it. The same attitude, though perhaps not equally pronounced, is characteristic of Roman Catholics, especially in countries where they are in a majority. But it has been characteristic of Protestantism, especially of those forms of it which lay great stress on individual conversion, to make full membership of the Church a thing which the individual does not achieve unless he is moved thereto as a result of strong personal and individual conviction. Partly as a result of this, partly as a reaction against the spiritual deadness of Established Churches, which in most countries reached its zenith in the eighteenth century, there has been since

the Reformation a plentiful formation, often in the face of strong discouragement and even of persecution, of new sects. And in every case where a sect has been formed by secession from the National Church, a further blow has been dealt at the theory of the identity of nation and Church.

(3) In Catholic countries the political alliance of the Church with obsolete forms of government, and her intolerant attitude towards new thought—an attitude shared indeed, but to a very minor extent, by Protestant bodies—has resulted, in Italy and France at least, in a violent hostility between the Church and the State, which has even gone so far as to cause membership of the Church to be widely regarded as positively unpatriotic and anti-national.

(4) In new countries, like the United States, every section and denomination of the Church known to the Old World is represented, and all stand on a level in the eye of the State; and the reaction (by no means inconsiderable) of American ideas upon the Old World, has finally disposed of the idea that the Church and the State are necessarily co-extensive.

Though, of course, this does not decide the question whether, in countries where circumstances are peculiarly favourable, a special connection of the State with one particular Church may or may not be desirable, provided always that sufficient internal liberty is allowed to the established Church, and complete liberty of conscience to those outside it.

The foregoing "bird's-eye view" of the history and causes of disruption has necessarily been a mere sketch; and it may appear to some that too much stress has been laid on national and political, and too little on the purely religious and doctrinal issues involved. If that be so, I would still plead that the error has only been to over-emphasise just those considerations, which are most frequently overlooked. In any discussion of the problem of reunion it is of the utmost importance to realise that the break up of the unity of the Church was to no small extent due to the fact, that national aspirations and national liberties could not otherwise find satisfaction; and to the fact, that the way in which Church and State were in practice identified, was a bar to

complete liberty of conscience and of religious activity. Once this is recognised, it is seen that many of the motives which led to disruption have simply disappeared.

Again, along with the change in political circumstances there has gone a modification of doctrinal issues, due to the changed intellectual outlook of the age. Doctrinal controversy is still with us, but most of the really living questions have assumed an entirely new form. In the past it has been claimed on behalf of every Church or Sect that it, if not it alone, conformed to the primitive Apostolic model, in regard both to doctrine and organisation. The progress of historical research has shown that this is an illusion.

It has been shown that there is a progressive development of doctrine in the New Testament. The primitive Apocalyptic Theology, reflected in the Synoptic Gospels, is gradually transformed into the metaphysical and mystical Theology of the Fourth Gospel. The various intermediate stages of this process can be traced step by step, in the series of Epistles written by St. Paul at different points in his career, and in the Epistle to

the Hebrews. In other words, it has been discovered that a process of "Theological Restatement" of an almost revolutionary character took place in the first century of the Church's history. Again, although opinions differ as to the view held by our Lord Himself, there is no doubt whatever that the Apostles believed that His visible return in glory would take place within the lifetime of those who heard Him. Hence, whatever may have been the original type of organisation in the primitive Church—and on that point statements are often made by the partisans of different views far more precise than the evidence warrants—it was not designed as a permanent arrangement.

These two facts are universally admitted. Their far-reaching implications are, I believe, less widely recognised.

Thus we see that in the Apostolic age there was certainly no one uniform doctrinal system, there was probably no one uniform type of Church Order. In their peculiar and characteristic features Catholics and Evangelicals, Presbyterians and Baptists, Friends, Salvationists and Welsh Revivalists can each

claim, with considerable show of reason, to have *some* point of contact with primitive usage, which is not to be found elsewhere. But every modern Church also exhibits developments of doctrine or organisation unknown to the Apostolic age. If the primitive Church be taken as the standard, it is a standard to which no one modern Church even approximately conforms; and no one branch of the Church can say that there are no particulars (whether they be deemed important or otherwise) in which some other branch of the Church is not nearer to the primitive model than itself.

But along with the discovery that no one of us is really "primitive," there has arisen the doubt whether it is really essential, or even possible to be so. An age which believes in Evolution is disinclined to find in "the primitive," or indeed in any epoch of the past, the last word in either organisation or theology.

The old Protestant theory that the whole of the development, between the Church of the Apostles and the Church of Hildebrand, was nothing but a long process of degeneration

and corruption, and the contemporary Roman theory, which applies a similar judgment to the development of modern Protestantism, have both lost their plausibility. It is coming to be seen that both these developments, whatever their defects, were essentially adaptations of the organism to enable it to cope with its varying political, social and intellectual environment; and that therefore both are legitimate, though necessarily to some extent one-sided and transitional, embodiments of religious truth and of the Christian Ideal. Considerations like these, it is true, are only explicitly realised by a minority, but, in a vague way, they are rapidly coming to influence the outlook of wider and wider circles. Accordingly, though few discriminating persons are found to maintain that either doctrine or organisation are unimportant, there is a widespread feeling that the old controversial way of approaching these questions has lost all meaning, and that, in so far as divisions depend on these particular controversies, their *raison d'être* has disappeared.

I am indeed, inclined to think that, in

practice, what I may call "temperamental" differences are as potent as doctrinal, in keeping existing divisions alive. The type of service, the devotional dialect, the religious "atmosphere," which are endeared to members of one Church, grate upon those of another. Besides this, in a country like England, a long period during which one set of Christians have been liable to political disabilities, from which others have been immune, has left behind it a heritage of mutual prejudice, which often makes religious differences seem deeper than they really are.

Divisions, and those important ones, still exist; but very often the line of division cuts across the lines of the old divisions of sects. On the other hand, many phenomena in modern civilisation seem to be so evidently in direct contravention of the principles of Christ as to demand an effective protest from all Christians; but an essential condition of effective protest is unity among those who protest. Again, the Church has not merely to protest against evil, but to inspire and proclaim ideals of good. Here, again, division is a source of weakness. Last, but by no

means least, in great continents like Africa, India, China — whose importance for the civilisation and future ethical development of humanity is daily becoming more obvious— Christianity is only an infant force; and the uncertain voice, the paralysed effort and the dissipated energy, which result from disunion, simply *will* not be ignored; while, against the dark background of heathenism, even the most fundamental differences between Christians begin to dwindle, and all lesser differences seem trivial and absurd.

Part II.—*The Preliminaries of Reunion.*

The question is often asked, "What are the 'notes' of the true Church?" The question raises a real and a difficult problem, but I am convinced that to state the question in this way is to preclude ourselves from finding a satisfactory answer. It ignores the possibility that, in a disunited Church, no one division may possess all those characteristics, which are actually indispensable to the life of the whole.

Thus, for instance, an organised ministry

ordained by an authority representing the whole communion, not merely a single congregation, a definite system of doctrine, and the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are all regarded as things essential, not only by Romans, Orthodox and Anglicans, but by Presbyterians, Lutherans and Methodists. The Society of Friends, however, has completely discarded them all. Yet, it cannot be maintained that the average spiritual level of this Society is in any degree below the average of any other; and few, who have ever attended a Quaker Meeting, do not feel that there is something here, which other Churches would do well to try to reproduce within themselves.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them," said the Master, and again "by their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles?" "The fruit of the Spirit," says St. Paul, "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Where these abound in a community, it is surely to run the risk of blaspheming against the Holy

Spirit to deny it to be a veritable branch of the Church of Christ, however sure we may be that it is deficient in some directions. For, be it observed, it is not in virtue of the unique gifts of individuals, but of the spiritual traditions of the *community*, that these special characteristics persist.

There are, however, many who find a difficulty in accepting this conclusion, because they feel that to admit that a Christian community, which lacks certain things, is truly a branch of the Church, is to admit that these particular things are not essential to the life of the Church. This I believe to be a misapprehension. The Church, *i.e.* the whole community of believers, as being the Body of Christ, is the organ and means of expression upon earth of the Spirit or Personality of Christ. But only a united and perfected Church could perform this function with any approach to adequacy or completeness. In a divided and imperfect Church, it is only to be expected that every section should be a defective and one-sided expression of the One Spirit. It is also to be expected that different sections should be inadequate in

different ways. And this is precisely what we find to be the case.

In the matter of Doctrine, for example, it may, I believe, be shown that bodies like Congregationalists or Friends, who definitely repudiate all doctrinal definition, are only enabled to do so, because, implicitly, they take for granted all that part of the Anglican or Presbyterian systems, which they do not expressly deny. That is to say, their position is essentially a protest against the tendency towards the over-intellectualisation and over-definition of belief, which is the bane of the more dogmatic Churches. But if no other branch of the Church supplied a definite system of doctrine, which could be made the basis of their freer interpretation, these "undogmatic" Churches would very soon be compelled to evolve a system of their own.

On the other hand, I believe it to be equally true that the indirect influence of the less dogmatic communions does much to save the more dogmatic from their characteristic defects. Thus the spiritual vitality of the Roman Church is conspicuously greater in countries like Germany or England, where it

is face to face with Protestantism, than in countries where it is in sole possession of the field. And this cannot be explained as due merely to the inspiring effect of opposition, because, where Protestantism does not exist, Rome has to face the still more bitter opposition of agnostic anti-clericalism.

The experience of the Mission Field seems to show that the same principle holds good with regard to Church Order and organisation. The American Mission at Madura, for instance, which is mainly worked by Congregationalists, is admittedly one of the most efficient in all India. Here the practical necessities of the work have led to an organisation by districts. Each is presided over by one of the Mission staff, who is assisted by a band of formally ordained native Pastors, and by a number of superior catechumens forming a lower order in the ministry. Thus without any deliberate imitation there has grown up a system closely resembling, as a member of the Mission frankly admitted to me, the organisation of Bishop, Priests, and Deacons in the early Church—which also, be it remembered, was a Mission Church. But if

a Denomination, which specifically stands for the principle of Congregational independency, finds itself, when removed from its original environment, forced to develop an organisation even remotely resembling Episcopacy, it would seem to show that the existence, somewhere in the Church, of a regular and organised ministry is essential; and that in the last resort the unorganised Churches are only able to remain so, because of the existence side by side with them of the more organised.

On the other hand, the weakness of the more highly organised Churches, especially of the Episcopalian Churches, is twofold. The emphasis on the "institution" weakens, for many minds, the grasp on the supremacy of the spiritual which no Quaker, for instance, can possibly be tempted to forget; and the existence of a clerical Order has in the past, at any rate in Europe, undoubtedly tended to depress the spiritual activity and initiative of the layman. The "priesthood of the laity" is a phrase often heard in the Church of England, but if the ideal were not kept before men by the existence of bodies like

Congregationalists and Friends, it would be even more miserably unrealised than it is at present.

Reflection on certain facts of history, and on certain phenomena of religious experience, inclines me personally to believe that it may even be *necessary* that, at least in some branches of the Church, the Historic Episcopate should be retained. That institution, however, has suffered so much from unwise defenders that I forbear to run the risk of adding one more to their number. But even if it be true, that the existence of Episcopacy, somewhere in the Church Universal, is indispensable, Episcopacy clearly is not the only, or even the most, indispensable thing. Bodies which lack this, but are rich in other indispensables, cannot reasonably be put on a lower level than those which retain this institution, but are defective in other important respects. A theory, according to which the Church of Montenegro is a branch of the true Church, while the Church of Scotland is not, is refuted by the facts of life.

Considerations like these do not, of course, settle the vital questions, what system of

Doctrine is nearest the truth, or what kind of Church Order is the best, but I would submit that they *do* show that it is possible—and if possible, surely also necessary—to recognise, as a veritable branch of the Church of Christ, every Christian community which obviously exhibits "the fruits of the Spirit," even though it lack certain things, which are vital, not merely to the well-being, but to the very existence of the Church as a whole. In other words, the question "What are the notes of the true Church?" is misleading, because, so long as the Church of Christ is divided, no part or parts can claim to be the true Church in any exclusive sense.

It is now possible to pass on to the consideration of the practical difficulties which attend reunion. These I will illustrate by a concrete example, which I have recently had the opportunity of studying at first hand.

In Southern India there has recently taken place a unification of the Churches founded by five British and American Missions of different denominations, and some other bodies are contemplating entering the Union. Three

Churches, however, feel precluded from participation, by what they regard as points of principle. The Anglicans stand outside, because they—or at least an important section of them, whose opinions the rest cannot disregard—believe that an episcopally ordained ministry is necessary for the regular administration of the Lord's Supper. The Lutherans stand out, because they hold that a correct belief about the nature of the Elements administered, *i.e.*, the doctrine known as Consubstantiation, is equally essential. The so-called "close" Baptists stand out, on the ground that Baptism, other than that of adults, and that by complete immersion, is invalid.

The emphasis laid on any one of these beliefs by those who hold them, is apt to seem unreasonable and absurd to those who do not; and those who do not hold them include, in the second and third of the cases mentioned, the vast majority of Christians, and, in the first, all Protestant Christians outside, and many also within, the Anglican Church. Nevertheless, there is behind each one of these beliefs, the solid conviction and experience of vigorous and international

Christian Societies—for the Anglican Communion, it should be remembered, is the smallest of the three—and, therefore, if there is any truth at all in the view of authority outlined in a previous Paper,[1] we are compelled to assume that each must contain at least an element of truth. The fact that it would be perfectly possible, and intellectually consistent, for the same individual to hold all three doctrines, further confirms this view. On the other hand, the fact that each of them is repudiated by such a mass of undoubtedly Christian experience, suggests the probability that, either in regard to the exact form in which they are held, or in regard to the implications and deductions, which are commonly held to be inseparable from them, there is in each an element of error.

We cannot, however, too often remind ourselves that neither doctrine, discipline, nor organisation have ever existed apart from, or can be understood out of connection with, the actual religious life of the Society in which they are found. They represent an endeavour to express, and, by expressing, to

[1] *Cf.* pp. 72-73.

fortify and preserve, different aspects of what is apprehended as vital by the Spirit incarnate in the community. The community may be regarded, in fact, as a kind of Corporate Personality, but a personality with a width, richness, and maturity of experience of infinitely greater scope than that of any individual. In ordinary life, however, no one estimates persons primarily by their "views," except perhaps at election time, but by their character as a whole, and by their views, only so far as these views are expressed in character. Similarly, in estimating the corporate personality of a particular Church, we should surely only consider its "views" in relation to their total reaction on the corporate life. Where an essentially Christian life exists in the community, along with views or practices which, to outsiders, seem out of harmony with, or strangely inadequate to sustain, such results, the probability is that the views or practices mean something different from what on the face of it appears. Accordingly, in considering our attitude to a given Church, it is ridiculous to take in isolation particular points of doctrine, and to ask whether we

agree or disagree with them. We can only consider the community as a whole, regarded as the concrete embodiment of a specific type of spiritual tradition.

These spiritual traditions are not only different, but complementary to one another. Thus no one who has had an opportunity of studying the actual working out in life of Anglicanism and Non-Conformity, can fail to observe that, in spiritual as well as in purely practical matters, each is in some directions wider, deeper, and richer than the other. How far this one-sidedness or limitation is inherent in the institutional or doctrinal system of either; and whether, by any modifications of either one or both of these respective systems, it would be possible for each to enrich its own life by learning the characteristic excellences of the other, are questions which it will take generations of discussion and experiment to decide. For the present it is sufficient to realise that the various branches, into which the Western Church has been divided since the Reformation, seem to have *specialised*, as it were, in different aspects of the Christian life; each

has succeeded in realising and expressing certain aspects with special success, and each has failed, often conspicuously, to develop others.

The total amount, which all Christian bodies have in common, is very large ; and attempts to disparage or minimise the importance of the things on which all Christians are agreed are much to be deprecated. But to work for reunion on the basis of discarding all but this "least common denominator," would be to imitate, in a different form, the Ultramontane error of seeking uniformity upon the basis of exclusiveness. A healthy unity is incompatible with uniformity ; and if you exclude every doctrine or practice with regard to which men differ, you exclude all the people who sincerely hold them—a policy which leads to the formation of new divisions, not to the disappearance of old ones.

But union, on the basis of a forcible suppression of differences, not only fails to achieve its object in practice, it is also wrong in idea. If it be true, for instance, that Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Friends, have each of them something to

learn from the other, none of them must throw away the characteristic truth they have to teach. But this characteristic spiritual truth is usually associated in the minds of those who possess it with some characteristic point of order, discipline or doctrine, which the others cannot accept. If, however, no institution or discipline is perfect, and no theology is an adequate expression of Divine truth, it is surely possible that, with certain modifications, the essential spiritual value may be retained, while the objection felt by those outside to the institution or the doctrine, as hitherto maintained, may be removed.

Sympathetic and non-controversial discussion, the study of historical origins, a better analysis of the meaning of terms or of the implications of specific religious beliefs and experiences, and a deeper grasp of the essence and proportion of Christianity, will, doubtless, in time, lead to the clearer elucidation of the elements of truth, and to the progressive elimination of the elements of error. Until this process has gone forward a considerable way, unification is impossible. But the process is one which will take time;

and, what is more important, it can only be carried forward when a certain amount of unity is already attained. For religious doctrines or practices are not like business contracts, which can be adjusted by friendly discussion between people of opposing interests. You only know the real meaning of a doctrine or a practice when, to some extent, you share the inside life of the community which prizes them.

The experience of all who have had anything to do with the Student Movement points towards two conclusions. Firstly, the most valuable contribution, which any denomination makes to the spiritual life of the whole, as often comes from that which is distinctive and characteristic of itself, as from that which it shares with all other bodies. But, secondly, these mutual contributions are most easily made where there already exists a fellowship, in the religious life of which members of different denominations can feel that they are essentially united. Hence, no cut-and-dried scheme of general reunion is worth discussing. Co-operation in good works, provisional experiments in partial

union, seemingly illogical working compromises must come first. Only by this means shall we come to understand one another, as it were *from the inside*; and only then, I would add, shall we learn fully to understand the real meaning and value of our own position.

Accordingly the solution of the problem of Reunion would seem to demand, as a preliminary stage, a system of loose federation or alliance, which, while securing a real feeling of unity, will do nothing to obliterate completely any denominational distinction, which is bound up with the maintenance of a valuable and distinctive type of spiritual tradition.

It is obvious, however, that the number of sects far exceeds the number of really distinctive types of spiritual tradition. The first stage, then, towards Christian reunion would seem to be a re-grouping of sects, so as to correspond to these main types. It is possible that it would then appear that some at least of these might take up a position, as semi-independent societies within a wider Church organisation—a position such as is occupied by the various religious orders, each

with its own characteristic ἦθος, in the Roman Church, or by an institution like the Church Army within the Church of England. But that possibility is one which can only be realised, when a general all-round advance in the direction of reunion has already been achieved.

The children of this world, we are told, are wiser than the children of light; and I believe that, at this point, we shall get great help by considering the analogies afforded by the political development of the last few centuries. Out of the chaos of small conflicting States, which arose from the ruins of the Old Roman and the Holy Roman Empires, a steady evolution in one direction can be traced. The goal to which this seems to be obscurely tending, is the union of the civilised world. That goal has not yet been reached; it is indeed still remote; but, at any rate, we can see clearly that such a union will *not* take the form of a unified and uniform World-state like the later Roman Empire.

The process has consisted, in the first instance, in the gradual unification or federation of smaller States into larger ones, which

roughly correspond to great national and racial types. England and France have been nations for many centuries, but it is less than fifty years since Italy and Germany became so; and we have just witnessed what perhaps is only the beginning of a similar rearrangement of sovereignty to correspond with national type in the Balkans. In some cases the closer correspondence between State-organisation and real racial or cultural divisions has been brought about by Unification; that is, by the complete merging of the independent existence of smaller into that of larger States; as was done in France and Italy. In other cases it has been by Federation, *i.e.*, by a union like that of Germany or the United States, in which each of the constituent bodies preserves unchanged its own peculiar internal organisation, and many of its independent sovereign rights. Unification and Federation have been further supplemented by the formation of close Alliances and "good understandings" between groups of larger States. The process has only been roughly completed, but it is just the fact of this incompleteness which constitutes the

chief obstacle to closer union. If it were not for questions like the question of Alsace, *Italia irredenta*, and the like, the great States of Europe would probably be able to live in permanent and unbroken harmony with one another. But it cannot be doubted that the relative unity and harmony in Europe is due to the relative completeness of this process of re-grouping according to clearly defined national and racial types.

Now the boundaries between States are necessarily determined, not merely by racial, but largely by geographical considerations; and the most stable countries are those in which geographical and race distribution most nearly coincide. But the religious divisions between mankind, at any rate in Western Europe and the New World, do not correspond, except very roughly, with divisions of geography or race. Primarily, as we have already seen, they represent different spiritual traditions; and the first stage of advance must be a re-grouping of sects in accordance with those traditions.

This process of re-grouping has already begun, and by the same alternative methods

of Unification and Federation, which we have seen at work in the political sphere. Thus Unification has produced in recent years the United Free Church of Scotland, the United Methodist Church, and the United Church of Southern India. Elsewhere Federation—not as yet formally so-called, but of a very practical though informal kind—is already beginning to manifest itself between English-speaking Protestants outside the Church of England. That the processes of unification and of federation will both of them advance rapidly seems highly probable; and it may well be that Churches, which in England can only accomplish a federal unity, will elsewhere achieve unification. Thus unification has already taken place between Churches of a Congregational and Presbyterian type in Southern India, and is at present under discussion between Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists in Canada.

The question of the relation of the Church of England, either to individual non-episcopalian bodies, or to any union of such bodies which might come into existence, is one that presents peculiar difficulties. It is obvious, on the one

hand, that unification is impossible; it is equally obvious that "good understanding"—though, as far as this country is concerned, it would be an improvement on existing conditions—is nothing like adequate to the necessity of presenting a united front in the heathen world. The alternatives would seem to be Federation, but on rather special terms, or Alliance. But both Federation and Alliance are metaphors drawn from the political sphere; and the exact nature of the problem will not be clear till we have discussed the limitations of the political analogy, and the question of Intercommunion.

In Russia and other countries, where the various branches of the Orthodox Eastern Church are in possession, the general level of culture among the clergy, and still more among the mass of believers, is notoriously low; but this state of things is one which is rapidly changing. The result of this no one can prophesy; but it is at least probable that in these countries, as elsewhere, the intellectual Renaissance will be followed, after an interval, by a religious Reformation. It is unlikely that this will proceed on

quite the same lines as that of Western Europe; but it can hardly fail to make Federation, or at least Alliance, between the Churches of the East and the Reformed Churches of the West easier than it is at present.

This is a consideration of the utmost importance; for there are many in the Church of England who regard closer union with other reformed Churches as essential, but who hesitate to advance it by practical steps, for fear such approximation would only widen the gulf between the Anglican and the Orthodox Eastern Churches. It is however probable that, granted an intellectual and spiritual revival in the Orthodox Church (and, without that, no improvement of present relations is possible), the result would be exactly the opposite. The Federal principle is already that which distinguishes Oriental from Latin Christianity. The Eastern Church is a Federation of National Churches. The Roman is a Unification despotically governed. The Eastern Church has never been content with a divided Christendom, but she never can submit to a despotic Pope. If,

however, a Federal Union should be constituted between the non-Roman branches of the Western Church, it is not too much to hope that the Federation of revived and reformed Eastern Churches might desire to bring themselves into closer connection with it. Once this were effected, the Latin Communion, instead of being, as at present, the largest single Communion in Christendom, would be the Church of a minority, and might then be willing to consider reunion on other terms than abject and absolute submission to the see of Peter.

But, unless and until the Church of Rome withdraws the demand for absolute submission, the most that can be hoped for in her relations with other Churches is mutual tolerance and respect, such as exists in the political sphere between the Triple Alliance and the other Great Powers of Europe. At present it seems unlikely, but if the other Churches can draw together, it is just possible, that in some far distant future Rome will change; and, in that case, the way would be open to a reunion of the whole of Christendom on a federal basis.

That unity on a federal basis is satisfactory as an ultimate ideal I am not prepared either to affirm or deny. It is clearly the immediate ideal for which to work and pray. When this is attained, it will be time enough to consider what further developments would give an even fuller play to the complementary principles of unity and diversity, corporate membership and individuality, authority and freedom. "We cannot do our great grandchildren's work."

So far political analogies may be used to throw light on the problem of reunion; but, just so far as the Church is not merely a human organisation on a large scale, but the expression of a Divine ideal, the analogy between the Church and the State will be misleading. Some things, which are essential to the unity of a State, the Church can afford to dispense with, and some things, which are indifferent to the State, are vital to the Church. In the past, as the former part of this paper has made clear, the analogy and the connection between Church and State have been fruitful causes of disruption, persecution, and stunted growth; and the

political analogy will hardly help us to reunion, unless we realise quite clearly at least two fundamental points in which it does *not* hold.

(1) The Church and the State differ in one most vital feature. The State stands for Law, the Church for the Gospel. That is to say, the State puts before men a minimum uniform standard, which can be enforced by compulsion: the Church holds up an ideal, to which the best will never attain, but to which the worst are still invited to aspire. The weapon of the State is compulsion; the weapon of the Church is persuasion. In so far as the Church is a human organisation, the element of discipline or compulsion cannot be entirely absent; but the actual exercise of any form of compulsion is a confession of the breakdown in practice of the ideal for which the Church stands. The word "compulsion," of course, is only applicable to discipline, which is resisted by the individual upon whom it is imposed; discipline which is accepted, as for instance in penance, is not really compulsion at all.

Now in the State it is vital that the seat

of authority should be easily located, and its decisions rapidly attainable. Questions of peace and war, besides many lesser emergencies, necessitate the existence in the State of a strong central authority able to act rapidly and decisively. Bismarck has left on record the reflection that in politics it is often better to come to a wrong decision than to come to no decision at all. In respect to most of the questions upon which the Church has to decide, precisely the contrary is the case. Especially is this true when the question concerns the presentation of religious truth in view of new knowledge.

The military organisation of the Church of Rome has given her a machinery, which enables her to decide quickly, and with plenary authority, on all disputed points of doctrine. This is often regarded as the strong point of the Roman system; it is really the point of greatest weakness; for wherever such an authority exists men insist on appealing to it, and the authority is compelled to pronounce its verdict. But in matters of this kind, to decide quickly means in most cases to decide wrong. When Galileo maintained

that the Earth went round the Sun, he maintained a position contrary to the plain words of Scripture and to the implications of the Apostles' Creed. It was not to be expected that contemporaries should at once see that the foundations of religion were not thereby imperilled. It is not surprising that authority, when appealed to, condemned those views. Nor is it surprising that the present Pope has condemned "critical conclusions" with regard to the Old Testament, for a method applied to the Old Testament cannot be excluded from the New; but it is likely that this latter verdict will discredit the authority, which pronounced it, as much as the former has done. Other Churches, of course, have made similar mistakes, but as Houses of Convocation and General Assemblies do not claim plenary authority, their action has been less disastrous. Those, who can afford to admit mistakes, find it less difficult to retrieve them.

In modern political theory the old doctrine of the "sovereignty" of the State is being severely criticised. The foregoing considerations show that it is still less admissible, if applied to the Church. The

conception of sovereignty was largely developed by the champions of the late mediæval Papacy, so as to combine the theoretically representative[1] autocracy of the Roman Emperors with the claim to Divine Right, through the Apostolic Succession, which made the Pope the Vicar of Christ. On the Continent, the various monarchs, who created the modern compact State out of the loose union of the Feudal State, inherited this conception. It was the king who made the State, and "*L' état, c'est moi*" is only just a parody of his position. In England, the concentration of sovereignty in a single individual was defeated; but the idea was none the less accepted that, whatever checks and counter-checks the constitution may provide, it is necessary that somewhere and somehow there should be found a definite and final expression of the sovereignty of the State. On this its unity, and, in difficult times, its existence, was felt to depend.

It is not unnatural, then, that the analogy of the State, and the unconscious influence of

[1] *Cf.* ". . . populus ei et in eum omne suum imperium et potestatem conferat."—Justinian, *Dig.* I, § 4.

the Papal tradition, should have made many conceive of the unity of the Church in terms of its seat of sovereignty. This point is one the importance of which, in the discussion of the problem of Christian unity, cannot be over-estimated. For, though we have given up the idea that the unity of the Church depends upon the sovereignty of an autocratic Pope, there is still subconsciously present, in the minds of most men, the idea that Christian reunion is only thinkable, if Christians can again agree upon some organisation, institution, or other device, which will enable men to see clearly wherein lies the sovereignty of the Church. No doubt most people envisage such sovereignty as one of a constitutional kind—a council of bishops, a parliament of presbyters, a general assembly of elected representatives of Churches or groups of Churches, or the like. That is simply because, while retaining the notion that unity and sovereignty are bound up together, they think of sovereignty in terms of the modern representative, rather than of the older autocratic State.

The conclusion, then, which I wish to suggest is, that this identification of unity and

sovereignty, already partially discredited in political theory, is entirely misleading, when we are seeking for the true conception of the Church. Or to put the matter in a simpler form, Federation or Reunion does *not* mean that we must evolve a representative central authority, which has *coercive powers* over the minor groups comprised in the Union.

In the political sphere, it is the existence of such an authority which makes the chief difference between Federation and Alliance. Both the United States, and Switzerland, the typically free Federations, have resorted to civil war, rather than allow freedom in certain directions to some of the constituent bodies of the Union. But in days when the Church can no longer call in the aid of the civil power, an analogous proceeding is as unthinkable as it would be undesirable. When once all Christians have realised the fact, and faced all the implications of the fact, that one essential difference of the Church and the State is, that in no circumstances can a United Church coerce minorities, and that the powers of any central authority must consist in moral prestige, not in the right of compul-

sion, the problem of reunion will take on a new phase.

(2) It has always been held that the visible Church does not exactly correspond even with that part of the invisible Church, which is still "militant here in earth." Even Roman theologians lay down that the visible Church includes some persons, who will ultimately be found not to be members of the invisible Church, and that outside the visible Church are some, who will ultimately be found to be members of the invisible Church. For the State this problem simply does not exist. The State can always proceed on the assumption that it is possible to draw a hard and fast line between those individuals who are its members, and those who are outside. The Church, for practical reasons, may be obliged to draw some kind of a line, but the moment that she forgets that the line is necessarily one drawn in a more or less arbitrary way, disastrous consequences inevitably follow. "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," said the Master, but many of His followers have always seemed to be princi-

pally interested in enforcing the necessity of exclusion. "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved" is a cry that in one form or another has been lifted up in every period of the Church's history. In the early Church the tendency manifested itself in the formation of exclusive sects like the Montanists and Novatians. In the sixteenth century and afterwards the same tendency was one of the notes of Puritanism. In the former period the Roman, in the later the Anglican, Church stood in the main for the more liberal interpretation of the principle of exclusion; but to-day the parties seem to have changed sides. Exclusion, though no doubt on somewhat different grounds, has become the note of the Ultramontane Roman, or of the extreme "High Church" section of the Church of England, while the sons of the Puritan stand for the Catholic principle of inclusion.

In favour of the Puritan or exclusive tendency it is usual to urge, that strength of conviction and distinctness of witness seem most readily to be produced in a community, whose conditions of membership,

whether moral or credal, are very clearly defined. But this result is surely better attained, not by limiting the membership of the Church itself, but by the formation of smaller societies within the Church—comparable to the Religious Orders in certain Churches, though without the celibate vow. For the Church is emphatically not a body of tax-payers, a trades-union, or a club, which has a right to insist that no one shall enjoy its privileges, who does not contribute to the support of its burdens. The Church stands for the principle that "it is better to give than to receive," and the more truly a man is a Christian the more widely will he wish to give, well knowing that, exactly in proportion as the receiver has appropriated the gift, he will desire to become in his turn a giver.

This principle is of special importance in its application to the difficult question of the conditions of admission to Communion. It is not disputed that in certain cases admission should be refused. But, whether regard be had to the theory of the essential character of the Church, or to the practical application of

the general principles of Christian charity, it is clear that in all doubtful cases the decision should *not* be in favour of exclusion.

PART III.—*The Problem of Intercommunion.*

The question of intercommunion, as between the Anglican Communion and the non-Episcopal Churches, raises difficulties of a unique and peculiar kind. I propose, therefore, to confine my discussion to these difficulties, and that only in so far as they affect the principles of the Anglican Church within its own borders.

A large section of the Anglican Communion is profoundly convinced that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered otherwise than by an Episcopally ordained minister is, to say the least, gravely irregular. Another large section vehemently repudiates the whole set of principles on which that judgment rests. Controversialists on both sides are in the habit of speaking as if they and their party were the only true representatives of the characteristic principles of the Anglican Church, all others being allowed to exist on

sufferance only. Such language is wholly indefensible. Both parties (along with a much larger intermediate section), and both sets of views have existed in the Church ever since the Reformation, and both are consistent with absolute loyalty to the Prayer Book and Articles. Both parties, therefore, have a right to demand that the Church as a whole take no official action, that is plainly incompatible with a reasonable interpretation of their respective principles.

On the question of admitting to Communion members of non-Episcopal bodies, there is a difference of opinion within the High Church party itself. A doubt as to the validity of the Eucharist, as administered in a particular Christian body, does not logically carry with it the view, that members of such a body are disqualified from participating in a valid Eucharist elsewhere. In most non-Episcopalian bodies the rite of Baptism is administered in a way which is admittedly valid, and according to the strictest Anglo-Catholic theology, their members are members of the One Body of Christ, but guilty of the sin of schism. The personal responsibility, however, of any

one living individual for the sin of a schism three or four centuries old—even on the assumption that the sin of the schism in question was all on the side of the non-Episcopalian body—cannot be regarded as great. The *main* difficulty, therefore, from the High Church standpoint in admitting non-Episcopalians to Communion, lies in the Rubric appended to the Confirmation Service, "And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed."

An occasional dispensation, however, from the requirements of this Rubric, is not, I would submit, incompatible with the strictest principles of Anglo-Catholic Theology. Confirmation, according to the High Church view, is a Sacrament. But it is expressly laid down that only two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, have been ordained "as generally necessary to salvation." Confirmation, therefore, is on a level with Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. Now, in mediæval times, the Sacrament of Penance, as well as that of Confirmation, was obligatory

before admission to Communion. The Church of England, since the Reformation, has seen fit to dispense with Penance, as of universal obligation. She has not dispensed with Confirmation. But she has surely the power to do so; she has in fact expressly done so, in the exceptional cases of all those who are "ready or desirous to be confirmed." The question, therefore, whether the dispensation should be extended to another class of exceptional cases, is seen to be one of expediency, and not of principle.

In favour of a relaxation of the requirements of the Rubric, at any rate under exceptional circumstances, a great deal of authority can be adduced, including that of many definitely "High Church" Bishops of all periods; and the practice of occasional admission has always been widespread. Nothing, however, had, until recently, occurred to render it necessary for the Church as a whole to take up any official attitude on the question. But the circumstances of the Mission Field, not only in Africa but throughout the world, are making it virtually impossible for the Church to avoid any longer

coming to a definite decision in the matter. That being so, it becomes obvious that the unity of the Anglican Communion will be seriously imperilled, unless both the High Church and the Evangelical parties are prepared to approach the question in a spirit of Christian charity. A solution will only be possible if each party shows its readiness to make every concession, which it is possible for it to make, without surrendering essential principles.

At the risk of appearing presumptuous, I will set down what I believe to be the concessions which the definitely "High" and the definitely "Evangelical" sections of the Church respectively, might reasonably be asked to make. On the bases of these concessions a solution could, I believe, be reached, which both sections could conscientiously accept.

The Evangelical party might, I would suggest, be asked to submit to two restrictions.

(1) Members of non-episcopal Churches living within easy and convenient reach of the ministrations of their own denomination,

should not be admitted to Communion, unless in highly exceptional circumstances.

(2) In so much as the action of an officer of any society may be interpreted as to some extent committing the society as a whole; no Bishop or Priest, whether at home or in the Mission Field, should himself partake of the Communion, when administered by one who is not Episcopally ordained.

On the other hand, if these two points were conceded, the High Church party might fairly be asked to recognise officially—under the category of a special dispensation for exceptional cases—the relaxation of the Confirmation Rubric, in all cases where a Baptised Christian, leading a moral life, is out of reach of the regular ministrations of his own communion.

Such a compromise as I have suggested, would involve no sacrifice of principle on either side; but that it, or indeed any possible compromise, is above criticism from the point of view of strict logical consistency, I am not prepared to maintain. The situation with which the Anglican Church is to-day confronted, is one which must be dealt with in

a spirit, which goes deeper than considerations of formal logic. Every day it is becoming clearer that the work of the Church of Christ will never be accomplished without reunion. In every quarter of the globe movements towards reunion are on foot, and in every quarter of the globe it is *we* who are holding back. All over the world men, whom we cannot deny to be true followers of Christ, are asking to be admitted to our altars—not as a matter of right, not as a matter of everyday usage, but in token of Christian brotherhood to themselves, and as a vital necessity to their converts, when cut off from the ministrations of their own communion. The situation is not of our creating, the question is one on which we would willingly have postponed decision, but to-day we are forced to answer yes or no. And the responsibility of saying no, is one which we simply *cannot* take.

The necessity of keeping alive the characteristic and distinctive discipline and tradition of a particular Church, will justify it in excluding from its altars members of other bodies, who are within easy reach of the ministrations of their own society. It will not justify exclusion

where this is not the case. Above all in a heathen country, to insist on exclusion means that you are to treat as excommunicate a missionary guest of another denomination, though he be a man with the spirit of a St. Francis Xavier; and it means that you are to cut off from the greatest source of spiritual help a coolie, lately snatched from heathenism by another Christian body, if he has migrated to a district where yours is the only Church; although such an one needs sorely all that Christian charity, brotherhood, and spiritual help can give him, if he is not to be dragged back again into the Paganism from which he has just been rescued. Exclusion, no doubt, is not the same thing as excommunication, but the distinction is a subtle one for simple minds to grasp, and in the Mission Field excommunication is a discipline frequently enforced and carries with it a moral slur; and, though it may be explained that exclusion implies no such slur, to the native mind a thing, which requires to be explained away, rarely ceases to be above suspicion.

The question is raised in this practical form

almost daily in the Mission Field, and if we ask what answer to it is most accordant with the principles taught by our Lord, I am convinced that the vast majority of clergy and laity in the Church of England would reply that there can be only one, viz., that the Confirmation Rubric, like the Sabbath, was made for man, and not man for the Rubric.

The difficulty, however, arises, that, in the minds of a minority, *any* waiving of the Rubric seems to involve a point of principle. The hardest of all problems are those which arise from the conflict of two apparently irreconcilable religious or moral principles. And those, who see their own way clear, are often tempted to adopt a shallow and unsympathetic attitude towards those who are feeling the full force of such a conflict. But, when principles seem to conflict, the only right solution is one which carefully delimits the sphere of operation of each ; and if ever that seems impossible, it must be ascertained, which is the higher and more fundamental of the principles involved, and that one must prevail.

The conflict of principle involved in this case is, I would suggest, essentially analogous

to that which nearly tore asunder the Church of the Apostolic Age. The rite of circumcision had come down with direct Divine sanction from immemorial antiquity, and had been submitted to by the Christ Himself; but the practical necessities of the Mission Field forced the Church to decide, whether or no those outside the old Jewish Church could be admitted to fellowship, without submitting to it. The fact that the particular point at issue is no longer an open question blinds us to the severe conscientious strain it must have caused to many Jewish Christians, and probably to some of the Apostles themselves, before they could bring themselves to see that the essential spirit of Christ's teaching necessitated the waiving, in a particular case, of an ordinance admittedly of Divine sanction. But the moral is a clear one; where two principles seem to conflict, that one must prevail which is most fundamentally in accord with the Spirit of Christ.

There are in the English Church to-day many who are themselves clear that the principles of Christ demand that, in certain cases, the requirements of the Rubric should be relaxed,

but who hesitate to recommend the formal authorisation of such a course, for fear that this might be followed by a secession—possibly to the Church of Rome. It is my own belief that, if the discussion is conducted in a spirit of charity and mutual forbearance, the fundamentally Christian principles, involved in relaxation, will gradually come to be recognised by all, or most of those, who are at present, not without good reason, alarmed lest other important principles should be sacrificed. But, should that much-to-be-prayed-for consummation not come to pass, the Church of England will have to ask, as must sometimes happen in the history both of societies and individuals, when faced with a choice between two evils, which of the two evils is the lesser?

That any considerable number of devout and earnest Christians should secede from the Church of England would be a thing infinitely to be regretted; but the day is past when we believe that they would do so at the peril of their souls. If, however, the Church of England, rather than lose them, should definitely commit herself to a position, which the great majority of her members believe to

be fundamentally opposed to the spirit of Christ's teaching, it would be the Church of England that would be in danger of losing her own soul. For, in the last resort, we must obey God rather than man, and to be afraid to take the right side, out of "respect of persons," is none the less a betrayal because these persons are sincere religious men.

There remains for consideration a further question, and one to my mind far more difficult. Suppose it to be granted that under special circumstances, such as those indicated above, Non-Episcopalians should be admitted to Communion in the Anglican Church; is the arrangement to be reciprocal? Are Anglicans, who are cut off from the ministrations of their own Church, to be encouraged to communicate at the Table of a Non-Episcopalian body?

Both from the point of view of strict theological principle and of the claims of Christian charity, such a proposal stands on an entirely different footing from that previously discussed. Thus, whether the conclusions advocated above be accepted or not,

it must at least be admitted that from the strictly theological standpoint, no persons recognised as having been validly baptised can be excluded from Communion, unless adequate reasons for their exclusion are produced, and the burden of proof must obviously lie with the theologian who would justify such exclusion. If, on the contrary, it is urged that an individual may permissibly receive the Sacrament in a Church with which his own Church is not officially in full communion, the burden of proof lies with those who would justify such liberty. Similarly, from the standpoint of Christian charity, it is a serious matter to take the responsibility of repelling, in the name of Christ, any sincere Christian whose conscience moves him to approach the Altar. It is quite another thing for an individual to claim for himself the liberty of approaching, or to urge others to approach, the Lord's Table in a Church whose doctrine and practice—whatever may be his personal view of them—are not recognised as adequate by his own communion.

The question is much complicated by the

fact that very diverse views of the nature of the Sacrament are entertained by different bodies of Christians; so that the Lord's Supper and the act of participation in it mean different things to different Societies. At first sight this would seem to deprive intercommunion of all or most of its meaning, except between societies which hold approximately identical views of the nature of the rite. Such a judgment, however, must be qualified by two important considerations.

(1) The line of division of opinion with regard to the nature of the Sacrament does not correspond to the distinction between Episcopalian and Non-Episcopalian. Thus, the Lutheran Churches, except in Scandinavia, have definitely discarded anything of the nature of Episcopacy; but they uphold the doctrine of Consubstantiation, which is a kind of half-way house between the Roman and the High Anglican doctrine of the Real Presence; they commonly use wafer bread, and they prescribe that the Sacrament be received kneeling. Again, though Presbyterians and Wesleyans have departed further than

Lutherans from pre-Reformation usage and doctrine, they entirely repudiate the view that the Lord's Supper is a purely commemorative rite, or little more than what was called a "Love Feast" in the early Church. On the other hand, ever since the Reformation, the Church of England has included individuals who interpret the rite in a "lower" sense than any of these bodies would officially countenance. Hence, in so far as the "intention" of the particular Church determines the meaning of the rite for those who partake in it, no final objection can be made *on this score* to an Anglican communicating in any Church whose Sacramental doctrine is closely akin to any form of that doctrine recognised as legitimate within his own Church.

(2) The difference between the "high" and "low" conception of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper depends in the last resort on whether the stress is laid mainly or exclusively on the act of worship and self-dedication and on the reception by the individual of a real spiritual gift, or whether it is laid on his participation in an act of religious fellowship

in commemoration of the Passion of the Lord. But originally both sets of ideas were combined; and in their official theology most sections of the Church still profess to combine them. In practice, however, they all fall short in one way or another. Thus, if it be true—and I doubt whether it is ever quite true—that in practice some Protestants make the Eucharist merely a "Love Feast" or act of congregational religious fellowship, it is equally true that in practice many Catholics make it purely an individual appropriation of grace. Where both are one-sided it is profitless to ask which is the *potior error*. The undoubted fact that, in the practical working out of their systems, different sections of the Church to-day over-emphasise the one or the other aspect is only another example of the poverty of doctrine and experience entailed upon us by division, and of the point previously emphasised, that in a divided Church, no one branch can claim to possess, or at any rate vitally to realise, the whole truth.

Nevertheless, whatever the united Church of the distant future may have in store for

us, we have at the present time to face the fact that the Communion Service does not mean the same thing to the average Anglican and, let us say, to the average Congregationalist. To both it is a religious act, but not one of the same kind. To the plain man, the difference between the predominant meaning of the two acts is brought home by the fact that in the one Church the Sacrament is received kneeling and in the other sitting. To an Anglican the significance of the Sacrament is determined, not merely by any strictly theological theory of the nature of the Presence of Christ; it is equally determined by its liturgical setting, by the part it plays in the devotional life alike of the individual and of the Church, and by its organic relation to the whole system of the Church considered as the "body" of Christ, that is, as the principal vehicle on earth of the operation of His Spirit. And an integral part of this system is the conception that the minister officiates in virtue of a commission derived from an authority which represents the whole Church and not a single congregation. Now it is quite untrue to say that the

ordinary Congregationalist regards the Communion merely as an act of religious fellowship or "Love Feast," and, accordingly, a Congregationalist who partakes of the Sacrament in an Anglican Church can, at any rate up to a point, do so in accordance with the "intention" of that Church. But in view of what has just been said, it is clear that if an Anglican were to partake of the Communion in a Congregational Church, it would not have the same meaning for him as the Communion in his own Church. In short, *to an Anglican*, a Congregationalist Communion *can* be a "Love Feast," but it cannot be very much more.

This I believe to be a large part, if not the whole, of the truth which underlies the distinction frequently drawn between a "valid" and an "invalid" Sacrament. "Validity" is a purely legal conception inherited from Latin theology. The Latin mind was essentially legal, and especially in the Middle Ages when Jurisprudence was the one secular science which had reached a high stage of development, its categories naturally dominated all departments

of thought. Much, therefore, of our theological vocabulary is of legal origin. But legal categories are particularly misleading, if applied beyond their own sphere, and especially within the province of philosophy or spiritual experience. But though the current controversial use of the term "validity" is as misleading as it is irritating, it is an endeavour to express the important fact that an Anglican does really miss something in the Communion Service as celebrated in most, if not in all, Non-Episcopal Churches; and this loss is not *to him* fully compensated, even if he does find realised in such a service more of that feeling of corporate religious fellowship, which he may admit to be an aspect of the true meaning of the Sacrament too little realised in the normal experience of his own Church.

A full recognition of this principle clears the way for a discussion of the question whether, and if so under what circumstances, it is desirable that liberty should be allowed to an Anglican to communicate in a Non-Episcopalian Church. That he should *not* do so if within easy reach of the ministrations of

his own Church follows at once from the general position urged throughout this paper, viz. that denominational differences, which are bound up with the maintenance of distinct and valuable spiritual traditions, should not be hastily or unnecessarily surrendered or impaired. I have already expressed the opinion that Bishops and Priests, in so much as they are officially accredited representatives of the society, should not under any circumstances claim this liberty.

How far can it be maintained that lay members of the Church are in any different case? On the one hand, it may be urged that the Layman no less than the Priest is bound to sacrifice his personal inclinations, and even his real needs, if they are found to conflict with a principle the maintenance of which is necessary for the good of the Church as a whole. On the other hand, although the bulk of the laity are not inferior to the clergy in strength and steadfastness of religious conviction, the laity are not, like the clergy, a body of selected and specially trained persons. Hence among the laity will necessarily be

included a considerable number of people who, if cut off by the accident of their place of residence from access to their own Church, are likely gradually to abandon, first all religious observance, and ultimately religion itself, unless they are admitted to full participation in the corporate religious life of some other body. Such persons, no doubt, are of the number of "the weaker brethren"; but the spiritual needs of the "weak brother" are the last thing to which the Church of Christ can profess indifference.

It is only, I imagine, for the sake of those, who are permanently resident in a district where there is no Anglican Church available, that any one would wish to claim the liberty of communicating in a Non-Episcopalian Church; so that on its practical side, the problem is one which does not occur in this country. It does, however, occur whenever Anglicans are resident on the Continent, in places where no English Chaplain is within reach. And it occurs still oftener in the Mission Field, wherever—and that means in *most* parts of India, China and Africa—owing to the

immense areas to be dealt with, and to the lack of men and money for the work, in order to cover the ground at all, the Missionaries of the different denominations have had to map out the country into areas, in each of which it is agreed that one denomination only shall work. In all such cases the position of an Anglican in a Non-Anglican district may be summarily, if perhaps somewhat uncharitably, stated by saying that he is precluded from participation in a Eucharist, but that it is open to him to take part in a Christian Love Feast. That is to say, he is cut off from one "means of grace," and that, to him, the highest, but there is still available another; for that a Non-Episcopalian Communion is *a* "means of grace," I imagine few Anglicans would care to deny. But, if that be so, it is surely a serious responsibility to forbid a man to avail himself of one "means of grace" (even though it be regarded as of an inferior order) because he is cut off by no fault of his own from another and possibly better one.

There is a further consideration which points in the same direction. Delimitation of

spheres in the Mission Field is admitted by general consent to be necessary, but it is morally and religiously indefensible unless each denomination implicitly pledges itself to do the best it can for converts of other denominations, who migrate into its own sphere, and trusts others to do the same. Where the Anglican Church is concerned, this surely means, not only that such emigrants shall not be penalised by being excluded from Communion, but also that nothing be done to prevent its own members, when they migrate elsewhere, from entering into the full Church life of their new home, *provided that* such participation is shown to be necessary to prevent them lapsing into indifference or Paganism. No doubt, in many cases, participation in a Church life, short of Communion, would be quite adequate, but, in other cases, anything less than full participation in all the religious interests of the Church of the convert's new home might be fraught with peril.

The difficulty is met in one well-known instance by the practice of sending a priest from time to time to minister the Sacrament

to any Anglicans who have migrated to a neighbouring area. Where possible, this certainly seems to be the best solution of the problem. But such an arrangement is not everywhere possible, and in the particular case I have alluded to, it is made both more necessary and more possible without friction, by the fact that the adjoining area is occupied by the Society of Friends, whose Church system does not provide any form of Communion at all.

Life is more complex than our philosophies would allow, and it is not only in matters of theology and religion that questions arise too intricate to admit of any neat and tidy answer. *Solvitur ambulando* is not an attractive solution to offer to any problem; it sounds too like saying "trust to muddling through." But there are problems which admit of no other solution, and I believe that this is one of them. A practice, which cannot be officially authorised, need not therefore be definitely forbidden; and I will make bold to affirm my conviction that, so far as the Mission Field is concerned, the Church

of England would make a great mistake if she were to commit herself to any definite and official ruling, which would preclude the individual Missionary from giving to any convert, who is about to migrate to another district, such advice as he thinks best fitted to his own individual moral and spiritual needs.

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